

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At the meeting of the **North Northumberland Local Area Council** held at Meeting Room 1, Berwick Leisure Centre, Northumberland Rd, Tweedmouth, Berwick-upon-Tweed TD15 2AS on Thursday, 23 March 2023 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT

G Castle (Chair) (in the Chair)

MEMBERS

T Thorne	G Hill
G Renner-Thompson	C Seymour
C Hardy	I Hunter
M Mather	M Swinbank

OFFICERS

G Bucknall	Highways Delivery Area Manager
M Bulman	Solicitor
V Cartmell	Planning Area Manager
B Hodgson	Neighbourhood Services Area Manager
R Kain	Built Heritage and Design Officer
R Little	Assistant Democratic Services Officer
B Macfarlane	Planning Officer
E Scott	Built Heritage and Design Officer
J Sharp	Senior Planning Officer
C Simm	Planning Officer

Around 30 members of the press and public were present.

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127 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Bridgett, Clark, Pattison, and Watson.

128 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the North Northumberland Local Area Council held on Thursday, 19 January 2023, as circulated, were confirmed as a true record, and were signed by the Chair with the following amendment noted:

Minute 103 to read “Councillor Seymour proposed to refuse the application for potential harm to a Grade II* listed building, visual impact, removal of heritage assets and she felt like the correct consultees had not been consulted.”

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the North Northumberland Local Area Council held on Thursday, 23 February 2023, as circulated, were confirmed as a true record, and were signed by the Chair.

129 **DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor Hill stated that she was a member of the Berwick Civic Society but did not sit on the planning committee and therefore had a personal but non-prejudicial interest in planning applications 21/02292/FUL and 21/02293/LBC. Councillor Hill also advised that she had met with both ASDA and the objector for application 22/03112/FUL and had a personal but non-prejudicial interest in the application.

Councillor Seymour stated that she was also a member of the Berwick Civic Society and had a personal but non-prejudicial interest in planning applications 21/02292/FUL and 21/02293/LBC.

Councillor Hardy declared that he had a personal and prejudicial interest in planning application 22/03112/FUL and would leave the room while the item was discussed and voted on.

130 **POLICING UPDATE**

Inspector J. Swan, Sergeant D. Budge and D. Sergeant Stapleton were in attendance and gave the committee members a brief overview of crime in the North Northumberland area.

The total number of incident reports over the past year had increased by 3% across the whole area, which included crime, antisocial behaviour, mental health concerns and welfare calls. Crime had increased by 6% however antisocial behaviour had decreased by 6%. It was noted by members how antisocial behaviour is controlled by Northumbria police, including prevention, collaboration, and enforcement.

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Incidents – Alnwick Area

	Incidents - Last 12 months	Incidents - 12 months prior	% Change
ASB	352	507	- 31 %
Crime	712	740	- 4 %

Incidents – Berwick Area

	Incidents - Last 12 months	Incidents - 12 months prior	% Change
ASB	471	521	- 10 %
Crime	1281	1203	+ 6 %

Committee members and members of the public were invited to ask questions, the following information was then provided:

- The Education Support team had been returning into schools since Covid restrictions had ended, and talked to students around antisocial behaviour, knife crime, cyber-crime and more.
- Northumbria Police utilised plain clothed officers to patrol certain hotspots for underage drinking.
- Northumbria Police would try to mediate neighbour disputes but did not always have the power to enforce.
- There had been no increase, patterns, or trends in dog attacks.
- Northumbria Police were about to restructure by reducing the number of PCSOs from 155 to 60 which would be divided among the force. PC officer numbers would increase by a further 134.

Members thanked Inspector J. Swan, Sergeant D. Budge and Sergeant D. Stapleton for their presentation and their time.

RESOLVED that the information was noted.

Councillor Hardy, Vice-Chair (Planning) in the Chair.

131 **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

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need for justifiable reasons for the granting of permission or refusal of planning applications.

RESOLVED that this was noted.

132 **21/02292/FUL**

Conversion of former community building to create 9no. flats, with construction of 1no. new house and garage block to rear (as amended) 5 Palace Street East, Berwick-Upon-Tweed, Northumberland, TD15 1HT

J. Sharp – Senior Planning Officer, introduced the application to members with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, it was noted that there would be a single presentation for both applications 21/02292/FUL and 21/02293/LBC, with a separate vote for each application and public speakers were granted 10 minutes to speak.

J. Sharp explained to committee members that following the North Northumberland Planning meeting on Thursday, 19 January 2023, Northumberland County Council had received a solicitor's letter explaining that the report had failed to mention paragraph 204 of the NPPF.

The following updates were noted by committee members:

- There had been a late representation from Historic Buildings and Places which highlighted concerns around the loss of the Armstrong and Speirs huts.
- The application was subject to a s106 agreement.
- Condition 49 was required to be amended following comments received from Mr Smart. An additional condition in relation to phasing was also required to be added.

J. Smart spoke in objection to the application and gave the committee the following information:

- There was serious harm to a conservation area.
- The Speirs hut was one of a handful of corrugated iron schoolrooms that had survived in England. Destruction had been condemned by three of the England national amenity societies.
- The new buildings were not necessary for the main building renovation.
- There was a false balance of harms and benefits distorted by the combined nature of the application.
- The new build project was a tangible threat to the vulnerable old buildings nearby.
- The applications should be refused.

J. Bell spoke in support of the application and gave the committee the following information:

- The applicant would like all of the construction works to commence at the same time.
- Berwick Barracks, Beamish Museum and Blyth Battery had declined to accept the Armstrong and Speirs huts as a donation.
- The site was in a sustainable location.
- The site was for the needs of Berwick Youth Project.

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Following members questions to the planning officer, the following information was provided:

- The Conservation Officer noted that there was less than substantial harm.
- The public benefit for removing the Armstrong and Speirs huts was to allow the Berwick Youth Project to use the space and refocus on activities.
- The phasing condition was originally proposed by Councillor Bridgett and voted upon in January 2023.

Councillor Hill proposed to accept the officer's recommendation to grant permission subject to the conditions in the report, a s106 agreement and the amendment to condition 49 and an additional condition to phase the works, and that works to the rear should not start until first occupancy of the main Georgian building with the exact wording delegated to the director of planning in consultation with the chair of planning. This was seconded by Councillor Castle.

A vote was taken as follows: FOR; 8, AGAINST; 0, ABSTAIN; 1.

RESOLVED that the application was **GRANTED** subject to the conditions in the report, a s106 agreement and the amendment to condition 49 an additional condition to phase the works, and that works to the rear should not start until first occupancy of the main Georgian building with the exact wording delegated to the director of planning in consultation with the chair of planning.

133 **21/02293/LBC**

Listed Building Consent: Conversion of former community building to create 9no. flats, with construction of 1no. new house and garage block to rear (as amended)

5 Palace Street East, Berwick-Upon-Tweed, Northumberland, TD15 1HT

J. Sharp – Senior Planning Officer, introduced the application and the following update was noted by committee members:

- An amendment to condition 25 to phase the works, and that works to the rear should not start until first occupancy of the main Georgian building with the exact wording delegated to the director of planning in consultation with the chair of planning.

Councillor Hill proposed to accept the recommendation, this was seconded by Councillor Castle.

A vote was taken as follows: FOR; 8, AGAINST; 0, ABSTAIN; 1.

RESOLVED that the application was **GRANTED** in line with the conditions set out in the report with an amendment to condition 25 to phase the works, and that works to the rear should not start until first occupancy of the main Georgian building with the exact wording delegated to the director of planning in consultation with the chair of planning.

Councillor Renner-Thompson left the meeting.

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22/02968/VARYCO

**Proposed alteration/conversion of 2 outbuildings to the rear of Longhoughton Hall into 2 holiday cottages, to vary condition 2 (approved pans) pursuant to planning application 19/02209/FUL
Longhoughton Hall, North End, Longhoughton, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 3AG**

C. Simm – Planning Officer, introduced the application with the aid of a PowerPoint Presentation. It was noted that there would be a single presentation for both applications 22/02968/VARYCO and 22/03383/VARYCO, with a separate vote for each application and public speakers were granted 10 minutes to speak.

The following update was noted by members:

- Condition 3 for application 22/02968/VARYCO was to be included in the conditions for 22/03383/VARYCO.

C. Ross spoke in objection to the application and gave the committee the following information:

- There had been no objection to the 2019 planning application for the site.
- There was a height increase on the pitch of the roof.
- The roof was higher and closer to the boundary line of the neighbouring properties.
- The neighbours felt that they were overwhelmed, overlooked, and overpowered.

A. Moss spoke in support to the application and gave the following information to the members:

- The Town and Country Planning Act required that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- The report found in paragraph 7.3 that the development was acceptable in principle.
- The building was in a poor state of repair and was deteriorating, Storm Arwen caused further damage.
- The development was of high quality.
- The building was attractive and integrated sensitively into its surroundings.
- The development had provided the building with a new lease of life and its intended use as a holiday home would secure its future and support tourism in Northumberland.
- The proposal complied with policy ENV7 of the Northumberland Local Plan and the NPPF.
- There was no opportunity for overlooking.
- The roof height increase was 14cm and not a 15% increase.
- The development as built was acceptable in neighbour amenity terms.

Following questions from members to the planning officer, the following information was provided:

- The roof lights were to be permanently fixed shut.
- The Hall was dated 19th Century.
- EV chargers were not added into a condition, but members could add a

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- condition to add EV chargers.
- The roof lights that were in place were conservation roof lights.

Councillor Thorne proposed to accept the officer's recommendations with an added condition to include EV charging points, with the exact wording delegated to the director of planning in consultation with the chair of planning, stating that whilst he had sympathy to the neighbours, the application site needed a new roof. This was seconded by Councillor Castle, agreeing that on the balance that the difference in height was not sufficient to warrant refusal.

A vote was taken as follows: FOR; 4, AGAINST; 3, ABSTAIN; 1

RESOLVED that the application was **GRANTED** in line with the conditions set out in the report and an added condition to include EV charging points, with the exact wording delegated to the director of planning in consultation with the chair of planning.

135 **22/03383/VARYCO**

Proposed alteration/conversion of 2 outbuildings to the rear of Longhoughton Hall into 2 holiday cottages, to vary condition 2 (approved pans) pursuant to planning application 19/02209/FUL Longhoughton Hall, North End, Longhoughton, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 3AG

Councillor Thorne proposed to accept the officer's recommendations with the added condition 3 from the previous application. This was seconded by Councillor Castle.

A vote was taken as follows: FOR; 4, AGAINST; 3, ABSTAIN; 1

RESOLVED that the application was **GRANTED** in line with the conditions set out in the report and the added condition 3 from the previous application.

A comfort break was announced.

136 **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

As the meeting approached the 3-hour limit Members were asked if they wished to suspend standing orders in order to continue the meeting. Upon being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED that in accordance with the Council's constitution, standing orders be suspended and the meeting continue over the 3-hour limit.

*Councillor Hardy left the meeting.
Councillor Castle in the Chair.*

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137 **22/03112/FUL**

Retrospective: Installation of Air Handling Unit with supermarket service yard. (Note: the AHU has been re-programmed to not operate between 22:00 and 07:00 hours unless the internal temperature in the store drops below 10 degrees which will only occur under exceptional winter circumstances) Asda, Main Street, Tweedmouth, Berwick Upon Tweed, Northumberland, TD15 2DS

B. MacFarlane – Planning Officer, introduced the application with the aid of a PowerPoint Presentation.

G. Dodds spoke in objection of the application and gave the committee the following information:

- The air handling unit had been the cause of invasive noise nuisance for a group of residents from houses on Mount Road.
- Local store managements assured neighbours of the initial installation that it would be quieter than the units it had replaced.
- Neighbours had been driven out of their gardens and forced to keep windows tightly shut to escape the noise.
- The initial machinery did not meet the terms of its planning permissions and was removed after the intervention of Northumberland County Council's public protection team.

Following questions from members to the planning officers, the following information was provided:

- The noise assessment was completed by ASDA.
- When the machine was switched on and off, it did not exceed background noise.
- Northumberland County Council had not completed an assessment.
- There had been no noise complaints submitted to Northumberland County Council.

Councillor Hunter proposed to defer the application to allow an Environmental Health Officer to attend the meeting and a note for a Public Protection Officer to visit the site. This was seconded by Councillor Hill.

A vote was taken, and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the application was **DEFERRED** to allow an Environmental Health Officer to attend the next meeting with a note for a Public Protection Officer to visit the site.

Councillor Hardy was brought back into the meeting.

138 **APPEALS UPDATE**

RESOLVED that this was noted.

139 **SECTION 106**

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RESOLVED that this was noted.

A comfort break was announced to allow officers to change over.

140 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No questions had been received.

141 **PETITIONS**

- (a) No new petitions had been received.
- (b) There were no petition reports for members to discuss.
- (c) No updates on previous petitions.

142 **LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES**

Highways

G. Bucknall – Highways Delivery Area Manager provided an update on highways.

Resurfacing

The 2022-23 North Area LTP schemes had been entirely completed as well as all the U and C money schemes.

Resurfacing schemes completed since the last meeting were:

- Powburn, on the road to Branton.
- Felton – Main Road to the A1.
- Newstead
- The road between the A1 and Lucker.
- New Haggerston
- Dene Drive, Berwick

The road from Pauperhaugh to Longframlington had been significantly improved ahead of the Todstead closure.

The gang had also laid the deck on the refurbished Union Chain Bridge.

Maintenance

Highways inspectors and maintenance gangs were continuing to fill potholes, unblock gullies along side any other maintenance issue within their remit.

Winter Services

Winter Service works had ended for the year.

The service received a high number of compliments and the team worked well.

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Members thanked Graham and the team for their continued hard work.

Local Services

B. Hodgson – Neighbourhood Services Area Manager, provided an update to members.

Winter Works

Winter works were ending for the year.

The Grounds staff had continued to work a 28-hour week during the Winter period, progress through scheduled work had been challenging but successful.

The team was on target to complete their scheduled winter work tasks.

Grass Cutting

Preparations for the upcoming grass cutting season had been finalised with all grass cutting equipment either serviced or scheduled to be serviced.

The team had started some additional paid grass cuts and were looking to start on the core cuts depending on ground conditions, with some routes slightly amended to improve service efficiency.

Northumberland County Council were recruiting seasonal grounds maintenance positions for the year.

Grounds Maintenance

Weed control activities would be undertaken in-house.

The team had started obstacle spraying in some areas and the blue dye additive would be used.

Street Cleansing

Street sweeping was always affected by ground frost. The service had been suspended during the cold snap in some areas as the brushes on the machine lost their effectiveness in freezing conditions since vegetation stuck to the ground.

Waste Collections

Residual and recycling collections continued to perform well and was business as usual.

The team had carried some route reviews in readiness for the deployment of the new RCV's to ensure they were deployed in the most efficient way possible.

Garden waste collections had started.

The increase in housing and customer numbers had meant additional tweaking of

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rounds was required however, all areas should benefit.
Initial take up for the service was high and the scheme remained popular.

Members thanked Bob and the Local Services team for their continued hard work.

RESOLVED that this was noted.

Councillor Mather left the meeting.

143 **LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED that this was noted.

144 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the North Northumberland Local Area Council was scheduled for Thursday, 20 April 2023 at St James URC, Pottergate, Alnwick, NE66 1JW

RESOLVED that this was noted.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

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