



Northumberland

County Council

Your ref:

Our ref:

Enquiries to: Rebecca Little

Email: rebecca.little@northumberland.gov.uk

Tel direct: 01670 622611

Date: Wednesday, 20 March 2024

Dear Sir or Madam,

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE** to be held in **ALNWICK ADULT LEARNING CENTRE, LINDISFARNE RD, ALNWICK NE66 1AU** on **THURSDAY, 28 MARCH 2024** at **6.00 PM**.

Yours faithfully

Dr Helen Paterson
Chief Executive

To North Northumberland Local Area Committee members as follows:-

S Bridgett, G Castle (Chair), T Clark, C Hardy, G Hill (Vice-Chair), I Hunter, M Mather, W Pattison, G Renner-Thompson, C Seymour, M Swinbank, T Thorne and J Watson



Dr Helen Paterson, 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
- 2)

Minutes of the meeting of the North Northumberland Local Area Committee held on Thursday 22 February 2024 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 where a matter arises at a meeting;

- a. Which **directly relates to** Disclosable Pecuniary Interest ('DPI') as set out in Appendix B, Table 1 of the Code of Conduct, to disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote and not to remain in room. Where members have a DPI or if the matter concerns an executive function and is being considered by a Cabinet Member with a DPI they must notify the Monitoring Officer and arrange for somebody else to deal with the matter.
- b. Which **directly relates to** the financial interest or well being of a Other Registrable Interest as set out in Appendix B, Table 2 of the Code of Conduct to disclose the interest and only speak on the matter if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain the room.
- c. Which **directly relates to** their financial interest or well-being (and is not DPI) or the financial well being of a relative or close associate, to declare the interest and members may only speak on the matter if members of the public are also allowed to speak. Otherwise, the member must not take part in discussion or vote on the matter and must leave the room.
- d. Which **affects** the financial well-being of the member, a relative or close associate or a body included under the Other Registrable Interests column in Table 2, to disclose the interest and apply the test set out at paragraph 9 of Appendix B before deciding whether they may remain in the meeting.
- e. Where Members have or a Cabinet Member has an Other Registrable Interest or Non Registrable Interest in a matter being considered in exercise of their executive function, they must notify

the Monitoring Officer and arrange for somebody else to deal with it.

NB Any member needing clarification must contact monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk. Members are referred to the Code of Conduct which contains the matters above in full. Please refer to the guidance on disclosures at the rear of this agenda letter.

4. NORTHUMBRIA POLICE

Representatives from Northumbria Police will be in attendance to provide updates on policing within the North Northumberland area and to answer questions from Members.

5. 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.

6. PETITIONS

(Pages 3
- 8)

This item is to:

(a) Receive any new petitions: to receive any new petitions.

(b) Consider reports on petitions previously received

- i. Safety at Swinhoe – report to follow
- ii. Petition seeking the Creation of Community Woodland between Shielffield Terrace & Prior Road, Berwick Upon Tweed (report attached)

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

7. TRANSITION FROM ANALOGUE TO DIGITAL LANDLINES

John Cooper, Strategic Programmes Manage, Digital and IT, will give a presentation on the transition from analogue to digital landlines by Openreach and to address concerns around resilience in the event of power cuts and/or major storms.

8. RURAL BUSINESS FUNDING PROGRAMMES

To receive a presentation from Ivan Hewitt, Rural Business Growth Programme Manager on two Business Funding Programmes which are available in the rural community.

9. BORDERLINE GREENWAY

For Members to receive a presentation from the Chair of the Borderline Greenway Community Interest Company regarding a project to create a greenway out of Alnwick on the disused Alnwick to Cornhill line.

10. LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

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

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the North Northumberland Local Area Committee is scheduled for Thursday, 30 May 2024 at 6:00 pm at Cheviot Centre, Wooler.

12. URGENT BUSINESS (IF ANY)

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 discussed or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.
- Complete this sheet and pass it to the Democratic Services Officer.

Name:		Date of meeting:	
Meeting:			
Item to which your interest relates:			
Nature of Interest i.e. either disclosable pecuniary interest (as defined by Table 1 of Appendix B to the Code of Conduct, Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest (as defined by Appendix B to Code of Conduct) (please give details):			
Are you intending to withdraw from the meeting?		Yes - <input type="checkbox"/>	No - <input type="checkbox"/>

Registering Interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

"Partner" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest.

Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

5. Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in **Table 1**) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –

- a. your own financial interest or well-being;
- b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or
- c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2** you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 above) **affects** the financial interest or well- being:

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise, you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where you have an Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

At the meeting of the **North Northumberland Local Area Committee** held at Main Hall - St James's URC, Pottergate, Alnwick, NE66 1JW on Thursday, 22 February 2024 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT

G Castle (Chair)
(in the Chair)

MEMBERS

T Clark
M Mather
G Renner-Thompson
M Swinbank

I Hunter
W Pattison
C Seymour
T Thorne

OFFICERS

A Craig

L Dixon
R Little
R McCartney

Programme Officer (Highways
Maintenance)
Democratic Services Assistant
Assistant Democratic Services Officer
Highways Infrastructure Manager

28 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Bridgett, Hardy, Hill, and Watson.

29 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the North Northumberland Local Area Committee meeting held on Thursday, 25 January 2024, as circulated, be a true record and signed by the Chair.

30 **LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN PROGRAMME AND HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE INVESTMENT IN U AND C ROADS AND FOOTWAYS PROGRAMME 2024-25**

The report set out the details of the draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) and Highway Maintenance Investment in U and C roads and footways programmes for 2024-25. Final approval of the programme would be made by the Executive Director for Place and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Improving our Roads and Highways taking into consideration the actual level of funding received from Department of Transport (DfT) and feedback from the Local Area Committees.

A. Craig - Programme Officer (Highways Maintenance) and R. McCartney - Infrastructure Manager, introduced the report advising that the £26,193,624 Local Transport Plan programme developed for 2024-25 consisted of improvements and maintenance schedules to address four key areas: Sustainable Transport; Safety; Roads; and Bridges, and Structures & Landslips. The details of the 2024/25 LTP were set out in Appendix A to D of the report.

The funding for the programme would be subject to approval of the Council's Capital Programme at the County Council meeting on 21 February 2024 and members were invited to ask questions or comment on the LTP.

Members enquired as to whether Town and Parish Councils could receive training into what to add to their LTP scheme proposals, and whether they could be sent the presentation which was given to members.

RESOLVED that this was noted.

31 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

RESOLVED that the next meeting of the North Northumberland Local Area Committee was noted as Thursday, 28 March 2024.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

Ch.'s Initials.....

COMMITTEE : **NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL AREA COUNCIL**

DATE: **28TH MARCH 2024**

Petition seeking the Creation of Community Woodland on land between Shielfield Terrace & Prior Road, Berwick upon Tweed

Report of: Paul Jones, Director of Environment and Transport

Cabinet Member: Cllr Colin Horncastle, Looking after our Environment

1. Purpose of report

To respond to the e-petition which closed on 14th February 2024 with 247 signatures regarding the request from Berwick Town Council to enter into partnership arrangements or community asset transfer in respect of a wooded area of land between the rear of Prior Road and Shielfield Terrace in Berwick upon Tweed to enable the creation of a community woodland, providing recreational space and allowing the issues of litter, antisocial behaviour and associated rodent infestations to be addressed.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Local Area Committee note the content of this report and support the actions proposed.

3. Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the following key themes in the Corporate Plan for 2023-26:

‘Thriving Places and Culture – Neighbourhoods are safe, clean and well maintained’

4. Key issues

The wooded area of land in question currently forms a relatively dense landscaped tree/shrub belt along part of Shielfield Terrace screening the rear gardens of residential properties along part of Prior Road (no. 2 to 64) from traffic on the B6354 Shielfield Terrace. It is designated as Highway Improvement Land but is not required for any further highway improvement activity and is non-operational land.

The County Council has recently adopted an Environment Policy Statement that strengthens its commitment to maintaining protecting and enhancing the environment. Ensuring that local communities have access to safe, high-quality parks and green spaces is a key commitment of the policy statement.

The County Council welcomes in principle the proposal for the community asset transfer of the wooded area to Berwick Town Council to facilitate the creation of a ‘pocket park’ that would improve access to green space and recreational

opportunities for local residents, whilst also helping to tackle issues around littering and flytipping.

The petition response demonstrates strong local support for the proposed creation of a pocket park. However, it is important that the residents of the residential properties whose gardens directly adjoin the wooded area are actively consulted on the proposals, so that they have a clear understanding of what changes would be made to the area and have the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposals that can be considered as part of the community asset transfer process.

5. Background

The Petition

The County Council has received a 247-name petition in support of the following.

Residents and Town Councillors, mindful of the maintenance issues of the wooded area between the rear of Prior Road and Shielfield Terrace, would request NCC to enter into partnership arrangements or transfer the unused land to enable a community woodland to be created, provided recreational space and allowing the issues of litter, antisocial behaviour and associated rodent infestations to be addressed.

The wooded area is not a recognised Green Space and its classification is Highway Improvement Land. It runs for ~240 metres alongside part of the B6354 Shielfield Terrace in Berwick upon Tweed. It is not required for any further highway improvement activity.

The wooded area currently forms a relatively dense landscaped tree/shrub belt along part of Shielfield Terrace screening the rear gardens of residential properties along part of Prior Road (no. 2 to 64) from traffic on Shielfield Terrace.

The management of the area is currently undertaken by NCC's Countryside team with maintenance tasks undertaken by the local Neighbourhood Services teams as required. NCC have on request from both residents and the local County Councillor actioned works to the area particularly to address storm damage and also to clear fly tipping.

NCC has sought to encourage local residents to form a group to take an active interest in the wooded area, as in other areas of the Town, and to action minor works to the area with the help of NCC to address concerns of fly tipping and anti-social behaviour. This approach has not been sustainable and as such there is no longer a residents group involved in the maintenance of the wooded area.

Image 1 - Wooded Land Between Shielfield Terrace and Prior Road, Berwick upon Tweed



Image from Google Streetview

Berwick Town Council has expressed an interest in taking on responsibility for the maintenance of the wooded area either through a licence agreement or via community asset transfer so that they could create a 'pocket park' to improve accessibility and access to 'green space' for local residents, as well as helping to address local concerns over littering and flytipping in the wooded area. The local County Councillor Isabel Hunter is supportive of this proposal.

NCC is supportive in principle of the request from Berwick Town Council to consider a community asset transfer of this non-operational land alongside the highway to facilitate the creation of a 'pocket park' improving access to green space for local residents. This would involve Berwick Town Council taking on the on-going maintenance responsibility for the wooded area and for the creation and maintenance of any paths / seating etc to help facilitate improved public access.

The petition has demonstrated strong support for the proposal from the local community. However, it is also considered necessary to demonstrate that the majority of residents on Prior Road whose rear gardens directly back onto the wooden landscaped area are also supportive of the creation of a pocket park, as this

would entail removal /thinning out some of the vegetation, creation of paths and opening up the area for public access. This could raise some concerns from residents over security and loss of privacy issues, increased noise and loss of screening from Sheffield Terrace, which would need to be considered as part of any community asset transfer process.

Proposed Actions

It is proposed that the County Council confirms to Berwick Town Council that it is supportive in principle of the proposed community asset transfer of the wooded area of land at Sheffield Terrace to the Town Council for the creation of a 'pocket park' to provide improved access to green space for residents.

The County Council advises Berwick Town Council that it should undertake direct consultation with residents on Prior Road whose properties adjoin the wooded area. The consultation should outline the proposed plans for the creation of a pocket park and what changes would be made to the wooded area to facilitate this, and to seek their feedback on whether they support this proposal.

Berwick Town Council should submit a formal application to NCC for the community asset transfer of the land for the creation of a pocket park, and to include details of the outcome of the aforementioned consultation exercise along with the petition response to confirm the proposal has support from those residents whose homes adjoin the area as well as from the wider community.

Implications

Policy	The Council has recently adopted a new Environment Policy Statement that strengthens its commitment to maintaining protecting and enhancing the environment. Ensuring that local communities have access to safe, high-quality parks and green spaces is a key commitment within the Environment Policy and the Council will continue to work with partners to ensure that community are involved in decision making. The County Council therefore in principle is supportive of this petition request and welcomes a formal community asset transfer application from Berwick Town Council.
Finance and value for money	The area is currently maintained by NCC and is non-operational land alongside the highway. Transfer to Berwick Town Council would entail the transfer of maintenance responsibility, offering a small productivity benefit for NCC enabling grounds maintenance teams to be engaged on other duties in the area.
Legal	None at this stage.
Procurement	None.
Human Resources	None at this stage.
Property	The site is owned and managed by the County Council.
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached)	The provision of a pocket park would improve access to green space, and any new paths should accommodate accessibility requirements.

No	
Risk Assessment	None.
Crime Disorder	Increased community involvement and engagement in the development of a 'pocket park' should help to mitigate risks associated with flytipping and antisocial behaviour (ASB). The design/layout of any changes to the landscaping and provision of paths should seek to design-out potential anti-social behaviour issues where possible (such as clear sight lines). NCC will continue to work closely with partners organisations and Northumbria Police to mitigate this risk and address any ASB.
Customer Consideration	The requirement to undertake a direct consultation exercise with those residents of Prior Road whose gardens directly adjoin the wooded area will ensure that there is a clear understanding of what is being proposed and for residents to have an opportunity to provide feedback which will be considered as part of the community asset transfer process.
Carbon reduction	None.
Health and Wellbeing	Improving access to green space for informal recreation and active community involvement in the maintenance of their local environment can both have significant health and wellbeing benefits.
Wards	Berwick West with Ord

Background papers:

None.

Report sign off:

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	n/a
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	n/a
Relevant Executive Director	
Chief Executive	n/a
Portfolio Holder(s)	Colin Horncastle

Author and Contact Details

Paul Jones, Director of Environment and Transport
 Email: paul.jones01@northumberland.gov.uk

Neil Dawson, Countryside and Green Spaces Manager
 Email: neil.dawson@northumberland.gov.uk

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