

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

TYNEDALE LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Tynedale Local Area Council** held at County Hall, Morpeth on Tuesday, 10 May 2022 at 4.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor T Cessford
(Chair, in the Chair)

MEMBERS

A Dale
SH Fairless-Aitken
C Horncastle
I Hutchinson
D Kennedy
N Morphet

N Oliver
JR Riddle
A Sharp
G Stewart
HR Waddell

OFFICERS

K Blyth
M Bulman
A Fisher
D Hunt

R McCartney
E Sinnamon
N Snowdon

N Turnbull

Planning Area Manager (West)
Solicitor
Construction Manager
Neighbourhood Services Area
Manager
Infrastructure Manager
Development Service Manager
Principal Programme Officer
(Highways Improvement)
Democratic Services Officer

ALSO PRESENT

K. McGuinness, Police Crime Commissioner and colleague
F. Forsythe and Dr M Chainey, Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership
12 members of the public and 1 representative from the press.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Scott.

2. MINUTES

Minute No. 101

Ch.'s Initials.....

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans

The 9th bullet point on page 14 of the minutes be amended to read:

'Facilities were needed to enable residents to use cycles as part of a longer journey as currently there was a limit of 2 cycles on some trains and very few busses accepted cycles.'

Minute No. 99bii)

Petition - Allendale Road, Hexham

Councillor Dale queried the procedure regarding amendments to recommendations. The Solicitor obtained clarification that the minute was correct and agreed to provide advice regarding motions outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Tynedale Local Area Council, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair, subject to the above amendment.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

3. PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED AT MEETINGS

The Chair advised members of the procedure which would be followed at the meeting.

4. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The committee was requested 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.

5. 21/03959/FUL

**Resubmission: Erection of rural worker's dwelling
Land South of Woodside Cottage, Bardon Mill, Northumberland**

The Planning Area Manager (West) introduced the application with the aid of a powerpoint presentation and advised that there were no updates following publication of the report.

Miss Ferguson, agent for the applicant, spoke in support of the application. She highlighted the following:-

- The owners had commenced discussions with her four years previously due to there being a genuine and pressing need on the farm for two workers to care adequately for their livestock. This had led to the son living in a caravan on the farm for most of his adult life.
- The process had been delayed due to Covid, staff shortages and the sadly the death of the applicant's wife before the appeal hearing.
- The report concluded that there was a clear functional need on the farm for a second worker to live there, otherwise there it would result in harm to the livestock and the business. It was imperative that the livestock had year-round care including nighttime calving and lambing.
- The report also concluded that the business was financially viable and had a reasonable prospect of remaining so. The family had farmed there for four generations.
- The only issue in dispute was the availability and suitability or otherwise of an existing dwelling, 'Keeper's Cottage', to meet the need. This was the reason the Inspector dismissed an appeal for a larger house two years ago and the recommended reason for refusal.
- Keeper's Cottage was a private investment with the income being part of the applicant's pension planning. It was also succession planning and was to be left to his daughter, whilst the son would inherit the farm in which he was now a partner. The alternative was that the farm be split upon the death of the applicant which would be to its detriment.
- Paragraph 10 of planning practice guidance states that a decision maker could take into account the fact that a new dwelling on site is essential for the continued viability of a farming business through the farm succession process. The Inspector overlooked this material consideration, and it is also not mentioned in the committee report.
- They were of the view that Keeper's Cottage was beyond the means of a farm worker and was rented out with stables and land. The appeal Inspector considered that the cost of building the new dwelling would not be dissimilar to the rent for Keepers Cottage, assuming that the house was separated from the land and stables and a reduced rent was accepted.
- They believed that there was an error within the Inspector's decision at paragraph 10 that the daughter owned the house, which was not true at that time.
- In a letter to the Council, the daughter states that she would not consent to a reduction in the rental income of her investment. Nor does she consider it reasonable to evict long-standing tenants from the property. She has no financial interest in the farm.
- Significant changes since the appeal hearing which should be taken into account when arriving at a decision include:
 - The size of the proposed dwelling has been reduced to make it cheaper to build.
 - The daughter had inherited a 50% share in Keeper's Cottage and confirmed that she would not accept a reduced rent for it or permit the eviction of the current tenants.
 - The son has been made partner in the farm, securing his future in the business and the farm's succession.

- The rent at Keeper's Cottage had been reviewed and had increased from £1000 to £1500 per month, making it even less viable for the son to rent.
- Ridley Farm was a successful farming business as a result of the commitment and hard work of the applicant and his son. It was the sort of rural businesses that planning and the Council should look to support and protect. They hoped that Members would therefore grant permission.

Mr Ferguson, the applicant, added they wanted to keep a young person on the farm in a tied agricultural cottage. It was difficult to get young people involved in farming and important not to lose valuable skills. They needed to do everything necessary to keep young people involved.

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

- The availability of properties on site which would meet the needs of the farming enterprise needed to be explored. Those properties did not need to be owned by the farm or the family.
- The Inspectors decision on a similar proposal was that it had not been demonstrated that there was no other suitable accommodation in the area which would meet the needs of the farming enterprise and available to a farm worker.
- The intention of the family did not mean that Keeper's Cottage was unavailable.
- Information received with this application stated that the secure tenancy benefitted from succession which differed to the information submitted with the previous application. An independent assessment carried out on behalf of the Council by Alan Jackson stated that as the tenancy of the farm was granted after 1984, it was only secure for the lifetime of the applicant with no succession rights. However, it was expected that the agricultural tenancy would pass from father to son on the father's retirement.
- NLP Policy HOU 8 states that the development of isolated homes in the open countryside will only be supported where:
 - a. There is an essential and clearly established need for a full-time rural worker necessary to meet the operational needs of a rural business to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside, and where it can be demonstrated that:
 - i. The business is financially sound and viable with a clear prospect of remaining so, the activity and landholding units concerned having been established for at least three years and been profitable for at least one of those last three years; and
 - ii. The functional need could not be fulfilled by any existing dwelling on the landholding unit or any other existing accommodation in the immediate area, which is suitable (including by means of refurbishment or appropriate extension) and potentially available for occupation by the workers concerned.
- The aforementioned policy required consideration of suitable properties in the area. They did not need to be owned by the farm or the family. Officers had concluded that Keeper's Cottage could be made available. If

Members concluded differently, this could be justification for a decision that the application be granted.

- The application under consideration was smaller than the property considered by the Inspector.
- Eviction of a short-term tenant of Keeper's Cottage was not a material planning consideration.
- The costs of building the smaller property had been reviewed by Alan Jackson and had not found a significant difference between the rent on Keeper's Cottage and the annual costs of constructing and fitting out a new dwelling.
- The Inspector had concluded that Keeper's Cottage was not economically unviable for use as a rural worker's dwelling.
- The rent of Keeper's Cottage had been set by the family and had not been tested.

Councillor Hutchinson proposed that the application be granted planning permission, contrary to the officer recommendation, and that the wording of conditions to be delegated to the Director of Planning with the agreement of the Chair, including an agricultural occupancy condition. It was accepted that the business satisfied the tests in Northumberland Local Plan Policy HOU 8 and required 2 workers to reside at or near the farm. Keeper's Cottage was privately owned and was not available as a rural worker cottage and at an affordable rent for a rural worker and there was not suitable alternative accommodation elsewhere in the vicinity of the farm.

This was seconded by Councillor Sharp.

There was some concern regarding the view taken on other applications of a similar nature and setting a precedent for applications in the future. Other members were familiar with the business and believed there was a genuine need for a rural workers cottage and did not agree with the Inspector that there was an available property on site. They also commented that each application was judged on its own merits.

Upon being put to the vote the results were as follows: -

FOR: 8; AGAINST: 3; ABSTENTION: 1.

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** permission and that the wording of conditions to be delegated to the Director of Planning with the agreement of the Chair, including a condition ensuring that occupation is limited to a rural worker only.

6. 20/03425/FUL

**Development of 9 no. residential dwellings (100% affordable) including associated access, car parking, landscaping and all other ancillary works (amended layout and housing mix)
Land North of Piper Road, Piper Road, Ovingham, Northumberland**

The Planning Area Manager (West) introduced the application with the aid of a powerpoint presentation and explained that the application had previously

been considered by the committee on 15 February 2022 although the Section 106 agreement had not been completed prior to the adoption of the Northumberland Local Plan (NLP) on 30 March 2022. The Section 106 would now only look to secure affordable housing on the site and no longer include a financial requirement to contribute to sport and play provision. Adoption of the Northumberland Local Plan had not changed the previous suitability assessment although the report and conditions had been updated to reflect the adopted Northumberland Local Plan policies and include additional conditions no. 30 for accessible housing and no. 31 climate change mitigation. She added that condition no 31 should be amended to refer to Policy STP4 and an additional condition no. 32 be added regarding broadband, see below:

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

- The conditions and informative would be checked to ensure that the wording agreed last time regarding the size of plants for replacement hedging was repeated in this application.
- A condition regarding EV chargers had been included.
- Tynedale had been in the minority with regard to former policies which sought contributions under Section 106 agreements for sport and play provision. Overall, the new plan would deliver better infrastructure across the county.
- It was disappointing that the decision notice had not been issued prior to adoption of the Northumberland Local Plan, the number of units proposed at this site was under the new threshold of 10 units. Whilst a contribution from this site could not be obtained for sport and play provision, funds for Ovingham could be available from a cumulative fund.
- It was confirmed that all of the units would be affordable housing for rent and managed by a social housing landlord.
- An additional condition regarding broadband was to be added in accordance with the new NLP policy ICTZ which required that fibre broadband be provided in rural areas.
- Officers could not speculate on the familiarity of the applicant with the new NLP and thresholds contained within its policies.
- It was agreed that good design did not have to be expensive, and officers would seek to increase design standards under the NLP.
- There was no specific policy which stated that EV chargers or solar panels must be installed at a site. However, condition no. 31 required details of proposals to minimise use of resources and mitigate and adapt to climate change before construction; developers could not refuse to incorporate measures such as the aforementioned.

The Development Service Manager agreed to obtain a briefing paper from Strategic Service Manger to explain the changes and benefits of the new plan in relation to Section 106 agreements.

Councillor Oliver proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application subject to:

- Completion of a Section 106 agreement for affordable housing.

- Amendment of condition no 31 to refer to Policy STP4.
- Inclusion of an additional condition regarding provision of broadband.
- Provision of EV chargers for every property.
- The wording of conditions to be delegated to the Director of Planning with the agreement of the Chair.

This was seconded by Councillor Kennedy.

Upon being put to the vote, the motion was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** permission for the reasons and with the conditions as outlined in the report and subject to:

- Completion of a Section 106 agreement for affordable housing.
- Amendment of condition no 31 to refer to Policy STP4.
- Inclusion of an additional condition regarding provision of broadband.
- Provision of EC chargers for every property.
- The wording of conditions to be delegated to the Director of Planning with the agreement of the Chair.

Councillor Riddle left the meeting whilst the following application was discussed.

7. 20/02417/FUL

Residential development of 9 detached and semi-detached dwellings, single and two storey, plus associated infrastructure works (amended description)

Land North of Lonkley Lodge, Lonkley Head, Allendale, Northumberland

The Planning Area Manager (West) introduced the application with the aid of a powerpoint presentation and explained that the application had previously been considered by the committee on 10 August 2021 although the Section 106 agreement had not been completed prior to the adoption of the Northumberland Local Plan (NLP) on 30 March 2022. There was no longer a requirement to include a Section 106 agreement to seek a financial contribution for sport and play provision. Adoption of the Northumberland Local Plan had not changed the previous suitability assessment although the report and conditions had been updated to reflect the adopted Northumberland Local Plan policies and include additional conditions for accessible housing, climate change mitigation, reference to policy STP 4 and broadband, see below:

Mr. P. Barber spoke in objection to the application and raised the following concerns:

- Flood risk. Whilst the inclusion of condition no 21 was welcomed to deal with foul and surface water from the development, as it was drafted it did not specify changes to the existing drainage systems.
- 2 properties were to be built over an underground conduit and it was suggested that condition no. 21 should include reference to rerouting of

- any existing water carrying cundies or conduits, otherwise there was a potential flood risk, and their objections would need to be maintained.
- The deliverable 5-year housing supply equated to 10.9 years across the county and therefore there appeared to be no need to approve the proposal in terms of housing need.
 - The local perception of housing need was for smaller, more affordable houses than larger and more expensive units which would be purchased by wealthier families moving to Allendale.
 - There was a covenant which prohibited development of the land and the current beneficiary of the covenant had confirmed that they had not been contacted regarding its removal. The availability of the land was therefore queried and that the covenant issues should be dealt with before building commenced to ensure that it did not become an abandoned building site.

Parish Councillor Mike Kirk stated that the Parish Council were concerned regarding the loss of the Section 106 contribution for sport and play. However, he had listened to the discussion on the previous application and understood the explanation. He requested that a copy of the briefing paper be shared with all parish councils so they could better understand the replacement policies and funding arrangements.

Mr. A. Herdman, agent for the applicant, spoke in support of the application. He wished to address the following points raised by the objectors:-

- It had not been in the developer's interest not to progress matters as they had raised finance to purchase the land. If they did not sell the houses, they did not make money.
- The application had previously been approved in August 2021 which had led to the purchase of the land and an application to change ownership with the Land Registry in September 2021. Due to staff shortages at the Land Registry, this had not been completed and received until March 2022. The Council's legal section had been unable to progress the Section 106 agreement until the title had been in the applicant's name. The delay had not been of benefit to the developer or the architect.
- There had been no changes to the proposals from August 2021 and that the principles of the development complied with the Northumberland Local Plan.
- Lengthy discussions had been held with Northumbria Water and the Lead Local Flood Authority regarding drainage and the risk of flooding to ensure that the design and calculations dealt with surface water. The proposed conditions specified the quantity and rate that could be put in the network and costly measures for underground storage.
- The development consisted of 2-4 bedroom dwellings with a mix of single and two storey, detached and semi-detached properties. The cost of houses had increased rapidly in the UK due to there not being enough houses.
- The issue with the covenant was not a planning matter. If land had been purchased which could not be developed, this was not relevant to the planning decision.

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

- The covenant issue was not one which was considered by officers when considering the planning application. Whether the site could be developed was a separate issue.
- A new decision was required, although there had been no changes to the plans and the principle of development had been accepted at the previous meeting. The report had therefore been updated to reflect policies and conditions in the newly adopted Northumberland Local Plan which no longer included a requirement for sport and play provision.
- Condition no. 35 was similar to condition no. 31 on the previous application (20/03425/FUL) discussed earlier in the meeting. It was also agreed that it would be helpful to include informative no.14 from the aforementioned application.
- The minutes of the meeting on 10 August 2021 and conditions agreed would be checked and replicated to ensure that protective measures around the pond did not exclude wildlife. It was suggested that this could be included in the landscaping condition as SUDS water features acted as a natural draw to children, they therefore needed to meet health and safety requirements whilst ensuring that there were also ecological benefits.
- Condition no. 16 would be amended to remove repeated wording.

Councillor Dale proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application subject to:

- Amendment of condition no. 35 to refer to Policy STP4.
- Inclusion of an additional condition regarding provision of broadband.
- Amendment of condition no. 16 to remove repetitive wording.
- The wording of condition no. 10 on landscaping to include details regarding safety measures and fencing to be provided around the pond.
- Informative no. 14 from 20/03425/FUL be included.
- Delegated authority be given to the Director of Planning, following consultation with the Chair regarding the additional wording/conditions.

This was seconded by Councillor Stewart.

Members expressed their disappointment regarding the loss of funding from the Section 106 agreement which would have been of benefit to facilities in Allendale. It was also disappointing that the number of units was below the threshold where there would have needed to be some provision for affordable housing.

Upon being put to the vote the results were as follows: -

FOR: 10; AGAINST: 1; ABSTENTION: 0.

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** permission for the reasons and with the conditions as outlined in the report and subject to:

- Amendment of condition no. 35 to refer to Policy STP4.
- Inclusion of an additional condition regarding provision of broadband.
- Amendment of condition no. 16 to remove repetitive wording.
- The wording of condition no. 10 on landscaping to include details and regarding safety measures and fencing to be provided around the pond.
- Informative no. 14 from 20/03425/FUL be included.
- Delegated authority be given to the Director of Planning, following consultation with the Chair regarding the additional wording/conditions.

8. PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE

The report provided information on the progress of planning appeals.

Councillor Dale requested that her thanks be given to Melanie Francis for the work to defend the Council on the appeal in respect of 20/01932/FUL Land South of Church Lane, Riding Mill, which had been a particularly difficult appeal.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

Councillor Horncastle left the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5.55 p.m. until 6.05 p.m.

LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS

9. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public.

10. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

The Police and Crime Commissioner, Kim McGuinness was in attendance to give an overview of policing and community safety matters in the Tynedale area. She raised the following points:

- The role of the Police and Crime Commissioner was to determine strategic policies and was not involved in operational decisions.
- The 'Fighting Poverty, Fighting Crime' campaign focused on the root causes of offending by tackling deprivation and unemployment.
- A reduction in the number of police officers meant that they needed to focus on prevention.
- Unfortunately, there was a positive link between poverty and crime.
- Operation Payback was a funding initiative sourced from the proceeds of crime. Applications for grants could be made twice per year from community groups that supported vulnerable people or projects that provided diversionary activities to help tackle anti-social behaviour. Allendale Youth Ambition had been successful in a recent bid. Applications would be open in June 2022 from organisations in

Northumberland for grants up to £5,000 to provide activities during the summer holidays.

- Rural crime, including theft of vehicles and machinery, was being addressed by tackling organised criminal groups, FarmWatch schemes and Operation Checkpoint.
- Northumberland and the police force region were very safe areas.

She provided the following information in response to questions:

- They were working on plans for the former police houses in Fairfield, Hexham which had previously been identified for sale. She agreed to liaise with Councillor Kennedy.
- There had been drug related deaths and crime in Haltwhistle which was uncharacteristic of the area and needed a two-pronged approach with preventative work. There had been drug related arrests and a recent substantial sentence for the supply of drugs by one individual. They needed to raise awareness with the community of the consequences.
- Other methods of consultation and engagement were being used instead of the local multi agency panels. They welcomed discussions to find alternative ways of working with partners, but they could not be funded from the proceeds of crime fund. Members expressed concern that their involvement and local knowledge was lost when LMAPs had ceased.
- The recruitment of new police officers was going well with 423 new officers in post out of the allocation of 615. However, they did not entirely replace the 1,100 officers that had previously been lost when austerity measures had been implemented.
- Whilst unemployment was an issue, more people were living in poverty which had a huge impact on crime and the victims of crime.
- The role of the Police and Crime Commissioner did not involve operational matters. They hoped to influence the environment and ask questions, which could be seen as political.
- She was attending each of the Northumberland Local Area Council's to address issues relevant to the different areas of the county. She agreed that it was important to acknowledge the causes of problems and commented that there had been a significant reduction in money spent on youth services in the last 12 years which had led to an increase in youth disorder.
- Implementation of drug testing within schools was not within her authority. However, a pilot drug test on arrest scheme in Newcastle was to be rolled out across the force area.
- She was very proud of the Violence Reduction Unit and their work to prevent young people becoming vulnerable to drugs and targeting those that made their living out of selling drugs.
- The decision to close police stations had been an operational one following an in-depth analysis regarding their use. The Police and Crime Commissioner would not have been involved in that decision. Unfortunately, they did not have the funds to reopen police stations and her preference was to employ more officers than provide desks. Comments regarding the consultation process in Prudhoe would be passed to the relevant section.

- The allocation of seats on the Northumbria Police and Crime Panel was determined by the Council and its administration.

Several of the Members thanked the Police Crime Commissioner and police officers for their work keeping residents safe in Northumberland.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

11. PETITIONS

This item was to:

a) Receive any new petitions:

There were no new petitions.

b) Consider reports on petitions previously received:

i) Dangerous Road (Peth Head, Hexham)

Catherine Bell, Lead Petitioner, explained the background leading to the current position on Peth Head. She commented as follows:

- The new bus station had opened on Dene Avenue in 2016 with measures to control the traffic including traffic lights, speed bumps and roundabouts. It was a busy 20 mph road with large volumes of vehicles which had been successfully calmed, creating a safer road for drivers and pedestrians.
- Dene Street and Peth Head ran parallel to the main road. The latter being a small side street designed for light traffic in an area populated by families, pensioners and with a vet practice. It was also 20 mph but with no signage or speed restrictions in place.
- The traffic calming measures on Dene Avenue had worked so well that drivers diverted their vehicles on alternative routes to bypass the main road which meant that there was a new main route without any of the traffic calming methods instigated on the intended main road.
- Between 8am – 10pm vehicles of all sizes, including buses, lorries, car carriers, logger wagons, school vehicles and buses, tractors, sheep transporters etc. used the street as a 'rat run' to avoid the roundabouts, traffic lights and speed bumps and disregarded the speed limit. It was suggested that if this was now the main road, it should have the same traffic calming measures as the other road.
- The lanes on Peth Head were 8 foot 9 inches wide whereas the lanes on Corrbridge Road were 12 feet 6 inches wide. The average width of a logging wagon, bus or car transporter was 8 foot 4 inches, without wing mirrors. This meant there was under 5 inches spare on Peth Head compared to 3 foot 9 inches spare on the main road. It could not be safer for larger vehicles to use the alternate route so it must be quicker due to there being no enforceable speed restrictions, despite both being 20mph. The main road was purposely built to accommodate large vehicles turning which Peth Head was not and observance of the speed limit was questioned.

- Quotes from residents referred to the structural damage from larger vehicles, difficulties crossing roads, the speed of vehicles, limited visibility, the dangers of using the road.

The Chair commented on his familiarity with the roads and the issues that the lead petitioner had raised.

Neil Snowdon, Principal Programme Officer (Highways Improvement), reported that the area office had been asked to arrange additional repeater signs in the areas and that 20 mph road marking roundels be provided at both entrances to Peth Head. A speed survey would also be carried out to determine actual vehicle speeds.

Several of the members expressed their support for the petition as vehicle speed and road safety was a concern and had been highlighted by one of the Councillors several months previously.

Robin McCartney, Infrastructure Manager, referred to the usefulness of site visit which had been held the previous week. He agreed with the comments made regarding the perception of speed and the difficulties crossing the road. He provided the following information in response to questions:

- The Highways mailbox received 300-400 emails per month and confirmed that the unanswered email would be investigated.
- An explanation of the Local Transport Plan process which required speed / traffic surveys; unfortunately, there was a backlog of requests. Those identified as a priority were carried out within 1-2 months, however there was an average waiting time of approximately 6/7 months whilst some had taken up to 12 months to be carried out. Officers were trying to improve communication and performance monitoring. Stage 2 required funding for a feasibility study if the traffic survey results indicated that this was required. Schemes had to be assessed and ranked against each other to determine the priority for the next round of the LTP programme. Depending on the conclusions, stage 3 required that if physical measures were required to be installed, a scheme be assessed and prioritised against others in the next financial year.
- If the survey identified that safety measures needed to be implemented quickly, this would need to be discussed with Members and a business case made to obtain support. Members Local Improvement Scheme funds could also be used to support and hasten projects
- Construction of pedestrian crossings could cost in excess of £100,000.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted and the following proposed actions be supported:

- a) Introduction of additional repeater signs and 20mph roundels (road markings) to be provided at either end of Peth Head.
- b) A speed survey be arranged to assess actual vehicle speeds. Depending on the outcomes of the survey, consideration be given to whether any further measures would be appropriate.

c) To consider updates on petitions previously considered:

There were none to consider.

12. LOCAL SERVICES UPDATE

Members received the following updates from the Area Managers from Neighbourhood Services and Technical Services:

Technical Services:

- The winter services period had now finished and had been mostly relatively mild. All staff involved were thanked for their participation.
- Preparation for surface dressing works had been taking place over the last 6 weeks for 11 schemes in the Tynedale area and over 450,000m² across the county.
- Work on LTP schemes would commence in June. A one-way system was to be implemented for Hencotes in Hexham during the 6-week summer holidays.
- The number of actionable defects had continued to reduce over the last few months.
- The Tynedale area had received a new hot box which meant that more repairs could be carried out each day. A new gulley wagon had also been delivered and was working around the programmed route and also responding to issues raised.
- A dedicated drainage gang continued to work in the area renewing gulley pots, cross drains and ditching as well as visiting known problem areas including several locations in Haltwhistle, Newbrough and Riding Mill.
- A number of Members schemes had been programmed.
- Visits to wards could be arranged with the Highways Delivery Area Manager on request.

The following issues were discussed:

- Resurfacing work around Hexham High School was scheduled to take place during the Autumn half term school holiday.
- Councillor requested gulleys be cleaned on the A695 at Riding Mill and agreed to email a list of locations after the meeting.
- Timing of repair work from a vehicle collision with the Shambles was queried and whether it could be completed before anniversary celebrations due to take place in October. It was noted Property Services were coordinating repairs from the motor vehicle accident as well as some electrical work and whether listed building consent was required.

Scheme start dates and updates would be provided to Councillors Kennedy, Fairless-Aitken, Stewart, Waddell, Hutchinson,

Councillor Riddle reported that discussions were ongoing regarding design work on Allendale Road which were expected by the end of July. They were taking account of work at the school, could possibly include 20 mph on the

lower section and whether a physical chicane was necessary or if it would create additional road safety concerns for HGV movement.

Neighbourhood Services:

- Residual and recycling waste collection services continued to perform well.
- The service was under significant strain from the loss of HGV drivers. Recruitment has proved difficult given the national shortage of HGV drivers and options were being explored including a new job advert strategy.
- Changes had been required at times to meet demand for the bulky waste service, which was constantly monitored, and extra booking slots created to meet the target of collection within 8 days.
- There were nearly 7,200 garden waste customers in the Tynedale area.
- Grass cutting had commenced with 2 or 3 cuts having been carried out which was what was expected with an approximate 3-week cycle. Some delays had been experienced due to wet weather around the bank holiday weekend.
- Weed spraying had commenced and would be carried out over the next 4-6 weeks period if weather conditions permitted. This was not during wet or windy conditions. Any areas of particular concern should be reported to the officers.
- Verge cutting was expected to take place in June and July.

Responses to issues raised by Councillors included:

- Issues regarding contamination of recycling bins were now being investigated by newly appointed officers. Households were normally given a warning letter with contaminated recycling bins emptied with the next residual waste collection. Recycling would then recommence once the bin was emptied.
- Glass could not currently be disposed of in the recycling bins as the processing plant for waste from Northumberland was unable to segregate materials when glass broke. A glass recycling trial was taking place within 4 areas of the county to enable the Council to collect data when Government funding became available. A food waste trial was also proposed to be held in the near future.

RESOLVED that the updates be noted.

13. TYNE VALLEY COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP

Fiona Forsyth, Community Rail Partnership Officer and Dr Malcolm Chainey, Chair, were in attendance to explain the role of the partnership in delivering the Department for Transport's Community Rail Strategy. (A copy of the power point presentation was enclosed with the signed minutes and would be circulated electronically after the meeting):

The presentation highlighted:

- The background and composition of the partnership. They were founded in 2004 and provided a link between communities and the rail industry.
- Tyne Valley Rail User's Group was a separate organisation with some overlapping aims.
- Community rail was originally developed to safeguard the future of local lines. The latest strategy was published in 2018 by the Department of Transport 'Connecting Communities with the Railways.
- Delivery of four key pillars:
 - providing a voice for the community
 - promoting sustainable, healthy and accessible travel
 - bringing communities together and supporting diversity and inclusion
 - supporting social and economic development.
- They worked with the rail industry, shareholders and education establishments across all age groups.
- There were 70 community rail partnerships across the UK. With the assistance of volunteers, they worked to increase passenger numbers on community rail lines.
- The Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership were based at the Booking Hall in Haltwhistle which was used for meetings and also for free educational visits for schools which included train travel.
- They worked with the local Rail Academy at Newcastle College which to develop the skills required for rail employees and promoted the area as a visitor attraction at railway stations such as Glasgow and Teeside.
- With the support of CrossCountry they had previously provided a student with a marketing internship. It was hoped that this could be repeated in the future.
- Delivery of an anti-trespass competition, Backtrack, as well as inclusion competitions such as Lyric and Line which explored reasons (and barriers) to travel, through music and song.
- Current projects included revival of the waiting rooms and redundant wooden buildings at Haltwhistle Railway Station.
- A review of the buildings, facilities and environment of the stations on the Tyne Valley Line had been undertaken by the Infrastructure Director to consider accessibility issues and develop projects should funding streams become available.
- Assistance could be provided by:
 - Working with them to improve stations.
 - Promotion of their education work.
 - Promotion of their inclusion work
 - Improve the interface between County and Railway.

Information provided in response to questions, included:

- Post pandemic, the railway required large amounts of public funding to keep it running. It was critical that the timetable met people's needs and that trains ran at the right time to enable connection with busses and the metro to increase passenger numbers. It was vital that these did not reduce further. Through ticketing would also be beneficial.

- Passenger numbers were increasing. Data was normally published annually in December for the previous financial year. They were also provided with some confidential Northern ticket sales data. The information was used to determine where efforts should be directed to target stations or journeys which were not being used.
- The difficulties of travelling with cycles was acknowledged given the restrictions on local trains and inability to make a reservation. The type of train used also determined how many cycles could be transported at a time. Some of the rolling stock was not adaptable. They had spoken to Northern who were looking at engineering solutions, but change was difficult and slow. They requested that members used their contacts to lobby the Government.
- Marketing opportunities were to be explored for off-peak leisure travel which would 'smooth' the number of users at peak travel times.
- Use of public transport was increasing and had been seen by increasing vehicle numbers at Prudhoe train station.

Members commented that some stations were well used but that poor lighting was a deterrent to potential passengers at others. Other issues included the availability of shelter on platforms and the timetable. A Councillor intended to enquire whether the Members Local Improvement Scheme fund could be used to help finance improvements at his local railway station(s).

RESOLVED that the presentation be received and that the comments be noted.

14. **OUTSIDE BODIES**

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

RESOLVED that the following list of appointments be confirmed:

- Groundwork North East - Land of Oak and Iron Project Board – **G Stewart**
- Haltwhistle Partnership Limited - **A Sharp**
- Haltwhistle Swimming & Leisure Centre Man. Cttee - **A Sharp**
- Hexham TORCH Centre Management Committee - **T Cessford**
- Prudhoe Community Partnership – **A Scott**
- Queens Hall Arts Trust – **SH Fairless-Aitken**
- Sport Tynedale – **N Oliver**
- Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership Board – **H Waddell**

15. **MEMBERS LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES – PROGRESS REPORT**

The Local Area Council received a progress update on Members' Local Improvement Schemes as at 1 March 2022. (A copy of the report is enclosed with the minutes.)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

16. LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME

A list of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings was circulated.
(A copy is enclosed with the minutes.)

Members were invited to email any requests to the Chair and / or Democratic Services Officer between meetings.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 14 June 2022 at 4.00 p.m.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____