

## NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

### ASHINGTON & BLYTH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council** held on **Wednesday, 11 May 2022 at 5:30 pm** in County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF.

#### PRESENT

Councillor L Grimshaw (Chair)

#### MEMBERS

C Ball	
D Carr	W Ploszaj
E Cartie	M Purvis
B Gallacher	J Reid
C Humphrey	M Richardson
J Lang	E Simpson
K Nisbet	A Wallace
K Parry	A Watson

#### OFFICERS

P Bowman	Neighbourhood Services Senior Team Leader
M Carle	Lead Highways Delivery Manager
N Dawson	Countryside and Green Spaces Manager
R Greally	Assistant Democratic Services Officer
R Wealleans	Neighbourhood Services Area Manager

### 03 PETITIONS

#### (b) MAKE HIRST PARK A NO DOG AREA

N. Dawson, Countryside and Green Spaces Manager, introduced the report to the committee. The petition closed on 21<sup>st</sup> February and there were 279 signatures. The following overview of the report was shared with Members:-

- There was already a Public Protection Order in place in the area.
- A high level of evidence was required for a dog plan to be put in place.

- The proposal in the report is to improve signage in the area to raise awareness with dog walkers.
- It was also suggested that awareness was raised with the public that complaints can be detailed and given times and places. The more detailed a complaint the more evidence there was collected to make a case.
- It was hoped that the installation of signage would be supported by Members.

The following comments were made in response to Member's questions:-

- Members felt the proposals did not go far enough and would not work to discourage dog walkers.
- The area the petition referred to a fenced off area and Members suggested that the gates be secured to prevent dog walkers entering the area.
- It was confirmed that it was unlikely that a dog ban was going to be achieved due to the points raised in the report.
- Members expressed their concerns over reports that footballers were having to poo pick before games.
- Members suggested there was a policy in the Authority which prohibited dogs from entering fenced off sports areas. Officers were unaware of said policy and that it would be looked into.
- Members were assured that signage would be put in visible places. It was acknowledged that there were schemes in place to encourage responsibility but it was suggested that the schemes would only appeal to dog owners that were already responsible.
- It was felt that a more public approach to issuing fines as a deterrent

## 04 LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

P. Bowman, Neighbourhood Services Senior Team Leader, gave an overview of recent work carried out:

### **Operational information to make the LAC aware of:**

#### **Waste Service**

- Residual and Recycling waste collection services continue to perform well with tonnages remaining on the high side.
- National shortage of HGV drivers has placed the service under significant strain with Recruitment has proved difficult in certain areas, but we are exploring other options among which is training of our existing workforce were feasible and to date we have trained 4 staff within the Southeast area.
- Demand for the bulky waste service remains high (performing well), we have made some changes to meet demand and this service is constantly monitored and booking slots adjusted accordingly.
- Garden waste service is up and running and is also performing well.
  - We have 753 new customers in our area so far this year.
  - We have now have a total of 10850 customers at present in the area serviced from Stakeford and Blyth Depot

#### **Grass Cutting**

*Chair's Initials.....*

*Ashington and Blyth Local Area Council, 16 March 2022*

- Required number of seasonal staff were appointed and we started cutting late March/early April
- We are now on cut 3 and 4 in all areas serviced from Stakeford Depot and cut 3 in the area serviced by the Blyth Depot
- The start to the grass cutting season saw a few interruptions in the form of wet weather and the easter bank holiday, this made the gap between cut 1 and 2 a little longer than average but teams are recovering well.

### **Weed Control**

- Weed spraying has taken place in the area with Blyth, Ashington and surrounding areas with around 30% complete for the first spray, spraying of obstacles underway and ongoing.
- Some wider area spraying, or ripping has been undertaken and the Hirst Area is a good example of this.
- We have also purchased weed rippers to fit on our John Deere ride on machines that can be quickly fitted and used where needed.

## **GENERAL - COUNTY WIDE INFORMATION**

### **Verge Cutting will start before the next LAC**

- Work will take 2 months, running through June and July
- Schedule remains unchanged from last year
- Verge figures (*no need to mention in South East*):
- We have 6.8 million sq. metres of verge to cut in the county.
- We engage local farmers to help us get through the significant workload.
- As usual, we will react quickly if we need to revisit any visibility issues due to re-growth.

The following comments were made in response to Member's questions:

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M. Carle, Lead Highways Delivery manager, gave the following overview:-

All Highways Inspectors and maintenance crews continue to work Inspecting, fixing carriageway defects, making repairs and making safe category one defects across the South East area.

Gully emptier is fully deployed dealing with reported issues and cyclic maintenance.

### **Larger Tarmac Patching**

Larger Tarmac Patching has been carried out in the following locations:

- St. Andrews Terrace, Ashington (2<sup>nd</sup> visit)
- Briarley Road, Blyth

*Chair's Initials.....*

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- Tynedale Drive (Small F2F)

### **Drainage Improvements:**

Drainage Improvements have been carried out in the following areas:

- Black Close Bank, Ashington (2<sup>nd</sup> visit)

### **LTP - Carriageway Resurfacing**

Footway and Carriageway LTP Resurfacing have been carried out the following areas:

- Woodhorn Road, Newbiggin (Prep)

### **Micro/Surface Dressing**

- Rotary Park Way, Ashington (Prep)
- Shearwater Way, Blyth (Prep)

### **Regeneration Scheme**

- Bowes Street, Blyth – Started Monday 10/01/22 (48 Weeks). Work progressing well, first phase nearing completion. Works have started on phase 2 Church Street.
- Waterloo Road, Blyth – 50% complete. Works due to be complete mid-July.

### **Other Work**

- Milburn Road, Ashington – Bollard refurbished due to start mid-June.
- Station Road, Ashington Parking Bay costs are being finalised and works will be programmed in due course. Local Members will be notified when dates are agreed.

### **Winter Maintenance**

Winter Services 2021/22 is now complete. Forecast observations ended at the end of April 22.

All the gritting fleet that does not have a dual function will be prepped by our Fleet ready for Winter Services 22/23.

Observation of the forecasts will commence again on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 with full WS commencing in full across the county on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022 for Winter Services 22/23 season.

## **06 LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME**

**RESOLVED** Members noted the plan.

## **07 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at 4.00 p.m.

## **08 URGENT BUSINESS**

With agreement from the Chair, Cllr Nisbet raised a concern regarding the Blyth Beach Huts. The following was read out:-

We recently wrote collectively to you about the Blyth Beach huts. We found your response disappointing. The Beach Huts in Blyth are being made inaccessible to local people because of the changes being made. Will you actively lobby Active Northumberland to look again at keeping these community assets accessible to local people for one off bookings? Not everyone can afford to block book the huts and while we welcome tourism into Blyth it mustn't be at the expense of local people.

### **Response**

**Active Northumberland had not made a firm decision on the availability of the Beach Huts for daily rental due to considerations regarding the national Covid-19 situation. I can now confirm that the Beach Huts will be available for daily rental, this Summer, on the same basis as pre pandemic. The Officers liaised with Active Northumberland and they have confirmed that the Beach Huts have only every been available for hire during June, July and August.**

Members felt it was still a concern as it's stated that they were only used during June, July and August however it was believed that they used to be hired out daily all year round. They were hired out by different groups all year round and they had been an asset to Blyth Town Council for many years.

The huts were built for the people of Blyth but there were now only 6 allocated to a daily rental and others were allocated to yearly rentals which made it difficult for people to book them. It was felt that they should be allowed to be booked all year round. It was hoped that Officers would look into it more and respond.

**Chair** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_