

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

ASHINGTON & BLYTH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council** held on **Wednesday, 13 July 2022 at 4:00 pm** in **Ashington JW Rugby Football Club Ltd, Ellington Terrace, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 8TP.**

PRESENT

Councillor L Grimshaw (Chair)

MEMBERS

C Ball
D Carr
E Cartie
B Gallacher
C Humphrey
J Lang

K Parry
M Purvis
E Simpson
A Wallace
A Watson

OFFICERS

M Carle	Lead Highways Delivery Manager
R Greally	Assistant Democratic Services Officer
R Wealleans	Neighbourhood Services Area Manager

01 MEMBERSHIP

RESOLVED Member's noted the membership details.

02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSCENCE

Apologies were received from the following Councillors; K. Nisbet, M. Richardson and W. Ploszaj.

03 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council meeting held on Wednesday 13 July 2022, as circulated, be a true record and signed by the Chairman.

04 PETITIONS

Members received an update on a previous petition report brought to committee. An update from N. Dawson was read out to committee.

Staff in Neighbourhood Services and Public Protection require time to gather data and further information on the behaviour of dog owners and the amount of dog fouling on the playing pitches at Hirst Park. Data on the frequency, amount and scope of dog fouling will assist us in determining whether an area ban could meet the evidential threshold required to institute a ban, and whether we could expect to be able to counter objections from individuals and organised groups.

We propose to gather information over at least an eight-week period before returning to the Local Area Council with a second report.

Members welcomed the update but felt that Officer to Member communication needed to be improved across the board.

05 LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

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:

- Cleveland Avenue, Newbiggin
- Rutland Street, Ashington
- Newlands Road, Blyth
- Thropton Court, Blyth
- Ellington Road, Ashington

Drainage Improvements:

Drainage Improvements have been carried out in the following areas:

- Additional Gully Tanker deployed (Storm Arwen)
- Woodhorn Crossroads
- Inner Relief Road, Blyth (NWL Investigation)
- Gatacre Street, Blyth (NWL investigation)

LTP - Carriageway Resurfacing

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

- Princess Louise Road, Blyth (Prep)

Micro/Surface Dressing

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

Regeneration Scheme

- Bowes Street, Blyth – Started Monday 10/01/22 (48 Weeks). Church Street estimated to be complete in around 3 weeks. Ongoing – Flagged footways on Bowes Street (Argos to top of street & opposite kerb line).
- Waterloo Road, Blyth – On target to be complete mid-July.

Other Work

- Northern Line – South Newsham temporary access agreed and awaiting start date (Morgan Sindell).
- DVC's (Section 184) - Large influx in work – NCC continue to deliver:

Winter Maintenance

Depots being restocked across the county with road salt.

SE area depot in Cowley Road salt storage is now restocked to its 4250 tonnes capacity.

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

- Members were reminded that the reporting system was the most effective way to report problems with gullies etc. as it is recorded on a system. This allowed Officers to monitor the progress of the problem. The service had several ways to inspect problem gullies including camera inspections. It was confirmed that more gully cleaners had been ordered to improve the service.
- For certain gullies it may be that it needed to be changed to a 'pot' to increase capacity. Investigation would be needed on an individual basis.
- It was confirmed that there was legislation that dictated damaged pavements must be replaced like for like. There were times where slabs would have been replaced with tarmac as a temporary measure but after 28 days the pavement should be replaced to meet its original condition.

- Officers were aware of road dips in Lintonville Road it had been identified as utility trenching and had been passed on to streetworks.
- Woodhorn Road was a concern for members with suggestions that parts were down to original cobbles. Officers confirmed they would investigate and if necessary, it would be taken to LTP.
- Materials for Mainstreet in Blyth had increased therefore it had to re-evaluated to be cost effective but Officers acknowledge that the scheme must finished.
- Quay road was highlighted as a concern. Officers acknowledged that there was an on-going consultation and agreed with members that the safest option will be highlighted and used. M. Carle would speak to the team and get an update.
- Members raised concerns over cycle paths. They acknowledged that there was a large amount in the budget for foot and cycle paths for 2022 but felt that it was as important to maintain the current paths and ensure they were in an acceptable condition. Members were aware of budget restrictions but hoped that where possible maintenance was also included in plan. Officers confirmed that cycle paths were regularly inspected and the new flail mower had capacity to clear pathways.
- Officers confirmed that obstruction of a foot or cycle path was a police matter. If the pathway had a dropped curb it could result in a temporary traffic order which could be enforced by Northumberland County Council. It was suggested an enforcement officer could attend a future meeting to clarify the Council's position on enforcement.

R. Wealleans, Neighbourhood Services Area Manager, gave the following overview:-

Operational information to make the LAC aware of:

Waste Service

- Residual, Recycling and Bulky waste collection services continue to perform well, we will continue to support our front-line service.
- New builds coming into the service area throughout the Southeast continue to grow as an example we are expecting the new estate beside Ashington Hospital to be over 600 properties upon completion.
- Garden waste service is also performing well but can be challenging on occasion.
 - As usual, we will undertake a garden waste service review at the end of the season to look for efficiencies and make the service more manageable.
 - We have over 250 new customers in our area so far this year.
 - This gives us a total of 9855 customers at present within the Southeast area as a whole.

Grass Cutting

- Just started cut 8 within Ashington area including Newbiggin and cut 8 in Blyth, we are slightly behind the projected cuts within Blyth but do expect to deliver all by the end of the season.
- Grass cutting proved to be a challenge for our teams at the start of the year.

Chair's Initials.....

Ashington and Blyth Local Area Council, 13 July 2022

- We lost several days to rain in the early part of the season then we experienced some warm weather, where the grass grew rapidly.
- 5 bank holidays in the early part of this cutting season added to the challenge imposed on us by the changing weather patterns.
 - This typically presents two challenges, the first being to complete our cutting rounds efficiently to avoid having long (and seemingly unmanaged) grass on view.
 - The second is the inevitable grass arisings left following our cut of grass which can be longer than usual.
- Thankfully conditions have stabilised, and our amenity grass is returning to normal standards.

Weed Control

- Service being delivered in house again this year.
 - All areas have received the first weed treatment we are also using a non-Glyphosate alternative in Play Parks within the area.
 - In house approach worked well in previous years so we are adopting the same this time around.
 - The Second Spray cycle has commenced in Ashington, and I will email Cllrs when I know your wards have been completed, in Ashington we have started within the Hirst Area with Woodhorn Villas, Woodbridge and The River's estate completed.
 - Newbiggin and Cambios have had there first spray and the second is due to commence shortly
 - You will remember from the last LAC update that blue dye is being used again this year.
 - I am working on securing a spare ride on mower machine which can have weed ripping brushes fitted to it, this gives a useful option for instant removal of weeds this compliments the smaller weed ripper machines in use at present.

GENERAL - COUNTY WIDE INFORMATION

Glass Trial:

This is ongoing in the Bedlington area where we have collected 136 tonnes to date.

The total glass collected throughout the 4-trial area's is:

- 299t – November 2020 to October 2021
- 217t – November 2021 to date.

In Bloom or Green Flag

- We have had a Green Flag inspection carried out in Hirst Park and are awaiting results this month, we expect to announce a successful outcome.

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

- Members thanked R. Wealleans and his team for their hard work throughout the year.
- Concerns were raised regarding Japanese Knott weed along Council Road. Officers would investigate and provide members with an update.
- Members acknowledged that using the ripper alongside the weed killer was very effective. Officers agreed but also highlighted the limited resources there were for weed killing.
- Officers confirmed that the cut that had taken place by the stream on Fulmar Drive was by the Environment Agency.
- The Blyth team were recognized for their hard work with the community group where they had rotavated difficult ground and created a stepped area.
- Officers confirmed they would look into communicating work programmes with members for cutting and weed killing so members were aware of the schedule.
- The flail mower was used to cut back pathways and cycle paths. It was explained that the cut had to be angled out to make the cut effective.
- Officers confirmed that 10 electric trimmers had recently been purchased for the County which could be used by operatives to tidy up areas around bins etc.
- It was acknowledged that there were limited resources for County Parks and issues were repeatedly being raised. Officers assured members that they did everything within their power to budget appropriately across the County.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

06 MEMBERS LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

Members raised that the members scheme budget had not been increased for a number of years. It was suggested that in light of the cost of living crisis the budget be looked at.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

07 LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME

Members were given an update that an archaeologist hoped to attend the September LAC meeting to give a talk on the recent discoveries at South Newsham Farm.

RESOLVED Members noted the update and the plan.

08 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Chair's Initials.....

Ashington and Blyth Local Area Council, 13 July 2022

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 11th August 2022 at 4.00 p.m.
(planning only)

Chair _____

Date _____