

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

ASHINGTON & BLYTH LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Ashington & Blyth Local Area Council** held on **Wednesday, 12 October 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
B Gallacher
C Humphrey
J Lang
K Nisbet

K Parry
W Ploszaj
M Purvis
M Richardson
E Simpson
A Wallace
A Watson

OFFICERS

R Greally

P Jones
R Wealleans

K Westerby

Assistant Democratic Services
Officer
Service Director – Local Services
Neighbourhood Services Area
Manager
Highways Delivery Manager

2 Members of the public were in attendance

01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSCENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor E Cartie.

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

(a) Members were informed that two e-petitions had recently opened titled; petition to reopen South Beach library and Banks Development petition.

(b) Members were reminded that an update would be received regarding the make Hirst park a dog free area petition. An update was requested by members regarding the dogs must be kept on a leash on Newbiggin promenade petition which would be looked into.

05 LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

R. Wealleans, Neighbourhood Service Area manager, gave the following overview:-

Grass Cutting:

- Grass cutting is coming to the end and remains on target to achieve required number of core cuts in all areas
- We have seen some challenging periods this year due to long spells of very warm and dry weather. This ultimately led to a decision to suspend grass cutting in some areas following assessment and observation of limited growth or browning. Not cutting these areas allowed the grass to recover and for expected visual standards to return.
- We are currently on cut 12 in Blyth and finishing off cuts 10/11 in the following areas: Ashington, Newbiggin, Sleekburn and Cambios.

Street Sweeping:

- We are working through our normal schedules but will move to leaf hotspots this month
- A usual, please bring any areas in need of sweeping or issues with leaf fall to our attention.

Winter Works

- We are starting to think about our winter works schedules, we have our routine annual maintenance commitments but welcome early requests from members on any areas which you consider require attention over this coming winter.

Weeds and Weed Trial

- Weeds this year have proved to be a concern in all areas of Northumberland with particular attention needed to the high

residential areas the second spray is ongoing throughout the area with the use of additional staff using the weed ripping equipment.

Waste:

- Other than a few minor vehicle breakdowns and staffing shortages, Residual, Recycling and Garden waste collection services are all operating well.
- Income from garden waste has exceeded target.
- Income from commercial waste and bulk collections have also exceeded targets.
- Teams will continue to review existing collection rounds in order to cope with ongoing housing growth as well as continued growth in take up of the garden waste service.
- Bottle recycling facilities continue to receive extra collections due to increased use; this trend has continued post covid.
- Demand for bulky waste collections remains high, extra slots have been created and covered by deploying extra resource when needed.
- Domestic waste tonnages remain higher than normal, various operational adjustments have been made to cope with the demand, but the situation remains a significant challenge for the service.

Other information to make the LAC aware of

- Verge cutting has been completed county wide, this was achieved within the target period of June & July.
- The kerbside food waste trial has been delayed due to supply chain issues (vehicle supply) however, the trial is now scheduled to start in November.

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

- Officers confirmed they would check the grass cutting schedule to make sure all grass cutting was finished.
- Officers acknowledged that the green waste trial had a cut off but this was needed to sustain the service.
- Members raised concerns with overgrown brambles and hedges in areas which Officers noted and would follow up. Members acknowledged that removal of brambles had to be carefully investigated to preserve diversity. There was also the need to confirm ownership of land before removing any brambles which would take time.
- It was confirmed to members that when the Authority adopted green spaces from developments a capital lump sum was given to the Authority to take on the land adoption licensed agreement. This was the preferred type of agreement as it reduced the likelihood of dual standards. This adoption was separate to the adoption of highways from developers.

- Members acknowledged that the local plan working group look at green spaces as part of the local plan and local plan was agreed by Councillors. Residents on new housing developments had paid maintenance fees.
- There was a request from members for officers to carry out a survey on ash trees on North Seaton Road. Officers confirmed they would look into it and explained there was an opportune time for this survey which would be early spring.
- Officers assured members that the new reporting system would allow members to keep track of progress and it would be kept up to date to reflect the work undertaken.
- Members asked for the speed of weed sprayers to be reviewed to ensure all weeds were being sprayed.

K. Westerby, 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:

- A189 Spine Road
- Links View, Blyth
- Coniston Road, Blyth
- Ariel Street, Ashington
- Dukes Gardens, Blyth

Drainage Improvements:

Drainage Improvements have been carried out in the following areas:

- Additional Gully Tanker deployed (Storm Arwen)
- A197 Ashington R/A
- Milburn Road, Ashington (Drainage Survey)

LTP - Carriageway Resurfacing

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

- Princess Louise Road, Blyth (Speed humps booked in early Oct)
- Unity Terrace, Cambois
- 4th Avenue, Ashington (Prep)
- Woodhorn Road, Newbiggin (Start 26th Sept)

Micro/Surface Dressing

- Shearwater Way, Blyth
- Rotary Park Way, Ashington

Regeneration Scheme

- Bowes Street, Blyth – Started Monday 10/01/22 (48 Weeks). Phase 1 complete. Works progressing on Phase 2 (Bowes/Wanley Street)
- Waterloo Road, Blyth – Complete

Other Work

- DVC's (Section 184) – NCC continue to deliver
- Woodhorn Road, Newbiggin – Refuse Island

Winter Maintenance

Winter Services observation started on the 1st October 22.

Full Winter Services starts on the 31st October 22

Over the summer we have been working with Vaisala our Weather Station and Bureau provider to upgrade and add additional weather stations countywide. We will also be deploying a number of embedded road sensors. These will all be coming on line over the next few weeks ahead of full deployment on the 31st October.

More info will be given to LAC's in Novembers Winter Resilience Report.

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

Chair's Initials.....

Ashington and Blyth Local Area Council, 12 October 2022

- Officers confirmed the routes for resurfacing had been amended to try and reduce the amount of adhoc repairs unless there was an imminent threat to life.
- There were a number of member's schemes members requested update from including; Woodhorn Road safety scheme and road development between Hodgsons road and Durban street. Officers confirmed they would get an update to members.
- Officers confirmed they were trialing a reporting system for members to receive more up to date details regarding the LTP and members local schemes. It was hoped that this would improve direct contact with elected members. The system would have a diary and show a timeline of the reported item. This was welcomed by members who had raised concerns regarding the suitability of the members scheme process.
- Members noted that different member schemes had to go through different avenues depending on an array of things including if further evidence needed to be gathered but officers acknowledged members frustrations regarding timescales with some schemes.
- There were a number of defects reported to officers including; signage at grand street corner and resurfacing at Percy road which would be chased up. Officers confirmed that there would be phased resurfacing but would confirm with members regarding areas; Eider Close, Mallard Way and Heron Close.
- Officers confirmed that the Authority had a new contract with Newcastle City Council for street lighting and any issues were reported directly to them.
- Members noted that there was a three month wait for speed survey requests but members should receive the details from the surveys once completed.
- Members hoped there would be collaborative work with network management and street works to ensure joined up work would take place for new broadband being installed. It was also hoped that there would be collaborative work between services to help with speed calming measure in Blyth and the new Blyth relief road.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

06 HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE UPDATE

P. Jones, Service Director – Local Services and K. Westerby, Highways Delivery Manager, gave a presentation to the committee. The presentation gave member an overview of the service. It outlined the laws the service must abide by as well as the processes that are followed. It also showed members the service current performance and budget along with the innovative new systems to help improve the service.

The following comments were made in response to members questions:-

- All members welcomed the new fix my street app and felt the new reporting system would be greatly beneficial to running the service efficiently.

- Officers confirmed that there were 11 area managers each with a team of 2 for the Authority.
- It was confirmed that external contractors were used by the Authority depending on the demand. However, the Authority was reducing the use of external contractors.
- Members suggested that the managers should move area in the Authority to allow for fresh eyes to do TAMP inspections. The officers took this suggestion on board.
- Members welcomed the idea of apprentices and the succession plan in the service. It was hoped the Authority would help support the apprentices so eventually they could go out and do inspections on their own.

RESOLVED that the information in the presentation be noted.

07 LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED Members noted the update and the plan.

08 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 16th November 2022 at 4.00 p.m.

Chair _____

Date _____