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NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At the meeting of the **North Northumberland Local Area Council** held at Meeting Room 1, Berwick Leisure Centre, Tweedmouth, TD15 2AS on Thursday, 24 November 2022 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT

C Hardy (Vice Chair - Planning)
(in the Chair)

MEMBERS

	T Thorne	G Hill
	G Renner-Thompson	J Watson
	I Hunter	M Mather
OFFICERS	M Swinbank	

J Blenkinsopp	Solicitor
G Bucknall	Highways Delivery Area Manager
V Cartmell	Planning Area Manager
B Hodgson	Neighbourhood Services Area Manager
R Kain	Built Heritage and Design Officer
R Little	Assistant Democratic Services Officer
T Lowe	Principal Planning Officer
B Macfarlane	Planning Officer
J Stewart	Strategic Housing Manager
R Willis	Senior Wildlife Ranger

Around 10 members of the press and public were present.

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69 **NOMINATION OF CHAIR**

In the absence of the Chair and the Vice-Chair, the committee were asked to nominate a member to chair the Local Area Council business of the meeting. Councillor Hunter nominated Councillor Hardy, this was seconded by Councillor Hill and agreed by all members present.

RESOLVED that Councillor Hardy was to chair the Local Area Council meeting.

70 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Bridgett, Castle, Clark, Seymour, and Pattison.

71 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the North Northumberland Local Area Council held on Thursday, 20 October 2022, as circulated, were confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

72 **DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor Renner-Thompson declared that he was a harbour commissioner for the North Sunderland Harbour and had an interest in item 14 on the agenda however following legal advice, it was noted that the interest was not prejudicial. .

Councillors Hardy, Hill and Hunter declared that they were commissioners for the River Tweed Commission and had an interest in item 14 on the agenda however following legal advice, it was noted that he interest was not prejudicial.

Councillor Swinbank explained that he was on the Board of NIFCA (Northumberland Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority) and had an interest in item 14 on the agenda however following legal advice, it was noted that he interest was not prejudicial.

Councillor Hunter declared that she was a parish clerk for Beadnell Parish Council and had a personal, but non-prejudicial interest in item 9 of the agenda.

73 **DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The report requested the Committee 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.

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Members were informed that items the following planning applications were withdrawn from the agenda:

- 22/02585/VARYCO
Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans) on approved application 20/01238/FUL to allow minor changes to design of windows of the new hotel building and update information to reflect the proposed treatment of windows on existing buildings.
Duchess High School Annexe, 2 Bailiffgate, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 1LZ
- 22/02587/VARYCO
Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans) on approved application 20/01239/LBC to update approved plans to reflect minor changes to window design of new hotel building and to reflect proposed treatment of existing windows on existing buildings. Removal of condition 3 – to be removed entirely or for wording to be amended to allow the proposed treatment of the existing windows.
Duchess High School Annexe, 2 Bailiffgate, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 1LZ

RESOLVED that this was noted.

74

21/04696/FUL

**Relocation of 2 Barns for agricultural storage, workshops and estate office with solar roof panels, new access track, hardstanding and garaging and change of use small agricultural field to garden.
Land West of Barnhill Farm Cottages, Guyzance, Northumberland.**

V. Cartmell - Planning Area Manager, introduced the application with a PowerPoint presentation and gave the following updates:

- Condition 2 - drawing no. 1100 Rev P09 would be substituted with drawing no. 1100 Rev P10.
- Condition 10 – Change the wording from “being prior to the commencement of development” to “prior to occupation”.
- Condition 11 – Change wording to “prior to commencement of development, details of the disposal of surface water from the development through the construction phase shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the approved details shall be implemented in full and maintained throughout the construction phase.”
- Condition 12 – Change wording to “prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved, details of the adoption and maintained of all SuDS features shall be submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority. A maintenance schedule and log, which includes details for all SuDS features for the lifetime of development shall be composed within and be implemented forthwith in perpetuity.”

W. Byatt spoke in objection to the application and gave the following information to the committee:

- The application description of relocation of two barns was misleading, when it would be two large new storage sheds of a height suitable for modern farm machinery and the two additional buildings would be built on a ridge and furrow pasture.

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- The conservation officer’s analysis of the damage was thorough and unequivocal.
- The planning officer had told the applicants agent “I am anticipating flooding, highways, scale and design, archeology, and principle to be reasons for refusal in addition to conservation and ecology. Even with the consultees concerns addressed, conservation and principle would be difficult to overcome.”
- The report explained that there would be a net increase of 2.5 jobs and secure the future of farming on the estate, as the estate was already farmed on, those jobs would be transferred rather than created.
- The committee was required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Councillor Ingleby spoke on behalf of Acklinton Parish Council and gave the committee the following information:

- It was the firm view of the Parish Council that it could not justify the damage that was identified so clearly by the Council’s Conservation Officer and Historic England.
- The proposal would fail to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- The character and appearance of Guyzance Conservation Area was formed by its setting within open fields that surrounded the village to the North and East.
- The ridge and furrow earthworks on the site contributed to the significance of the conservation area, and the settlement boundary was established to specifically include them.
- If the proposal was approved, two large modern storage sheds would be constructed at the eastern end of the village, of a height to house modern farm machinery, and an extensive hard standing, together with other buildings.
- Historic England had described the development as “unsympathetic in its form, scale and detail”.
- The planning report acknowledged that the appearance of the sheds had an unacceptable harmful impact on the character and appearance of the immediate and wider area and landscape.
- The buildings in the immediate area were characterised by their small-scale and low density, the proposal did not respect this firm and would have a greater visual impact.
- The Conservation Officer was reconsulted about the computer-generated images which showed the huge impact the proposed development would have from the east of the village.
- The parish council could not see how the damage would in any way be justified by the creation of 2.5 jobs, mostly in agriculture.
- There was no description in the paperwork of what the jobs consisted of, what new work would result from the application, or whether they would be part-time or full-time roles.
- The public benefit was minimal, but the damage to the conservation area would be significant and permanent. The Parish Council believed that it was unacceptable.

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H. Shipley spoke in support of the application and gave the committee the following information:

- The application would be part of a larger project. The centrepiece of the project would be the construction of a hydroelectric plant on the river Coquet, requiring an investment of over £2,000,000, which would produce green energy for the entire estate and beyond, unique to England.
- All objections to the planning application had been addressed and the officers had recommended the application for approval.
- The public benefits were in the report under paragraph 7.33, the applicant considered that there would be further public benefits, including offering schools an opportunity to use the green energy and hydroelectric plant as a learning resource.
- Paragraph 202 in the NPPF, required harm to be weighed against the optimum viable use as part of the public benefit. In hand farming on the estate would be the optimum and was the original viable use for the farm.
- The farm buildings were required to secure the viability of the farm.

Following members questions to the planning officer, the following information was provided:

- The Built Heritage and Design Officer could not recognise a genuine public benefit to the application.
- The hydroelectric plant was not tied in with the scheme and could not be taken into consideration as a public benefit.

Councillor Thorne proposed to accept the officer's recommendation with the updated conditions, stating that he knew Guyzance well however the stone buildings from the Victorian era were incapable of housing modern farming methods and there was a business case which should be supported. This was seconded by Councillor Mather.

Councillor Hill expressed that the committee should take the Conservation Officer's views seriously and that she was against the application, this was agreed by Councillor Hunter and Councillor Swinbank who also had concerns around the comments made by Historic England and the public benefit of 2.5 jobs.

A vote was taken as follows: FOR; 4, AGAINST; 3, ABSTAIN; 1

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions in the report and the updated conditions of:

- Condition 2 - drawing no. 1100 Rev P09 would be substituted with drawing no. 1100 Rev P10.
- Condition 10 – Change the wording from “being prior to the commencement of development” to “prior to occupation”.
- Condition 11 – Change wording to “prior to commencement of development, details of the disposal of surface water from the development through the construction phase shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the approved details shall be implemented in full and maintained throughout the construction phase.”
- Condition 12 – Change wording to “prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved, details of the adoption and maintained of all SuDS features shall be submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning

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Authority. A maintenance schedule and log, which includes details for all SuDS features for the lifetime of development shall be composed within and be implemented forthwith in perpetuity.”

75

22/02876/FUL

Construction of single storey front extension – resubmission of planning application red: 21/03848/FUL

Beach Lea Bungalow, 67 Longstone Park, Beadnell, Chathill, Northumberland, NE67 5BP

B. Macfarlane – Planning Officer, introduced the application with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, there were no updates.

G. Martindale spoke on behalf of Beadnell Parish Council and gave the committee the following information:

- The Parish Council were objecting for the same reasons as they did during the first submission of the application in February 2022.
- The application was a chalet which was part of a group of 8 attached properties. There were 36 of the L shaped chalets on Longstone Park, built around 1968.
- The chalets were subject to an agreement dated 25 June 1968 between the estate developers M J Liddell and Son Ltd and the Borough of Berwick Upon Tweed which prohibited the erection of any building or structure on the amenity areas.
- The application was the second planning application to infill the amenity area of the L shaped design on one of the 36 chalets, which would alter the local context and character of the estate.
- The precedent referred to by the applicant for the type of front extension was set when approval was given for Sunrise Cottage, 55 Longstone Park to build on their amenity area.
- The AONB was not consulted on the Sunrise Cottage planning application, but they were consulted on the Beach Lea Bungalow, they did not support the application because the extension was considered too large in terms of the host and would impact on the design of the building group.
- The Parish Council were concerned that the precedent set by Sunrise Cottage was being used.
- Beadnell Parish Council requested that the committee refused the application.

P. Taylor spoke in support of the application and gave the committee the following information:

- Longstone Park was a cul-de-sac with no through visitor traffic and had no distinguishable architectural features and had not been included within the boundary of Beadnell Conservation Area.
- The proposed extension was modest in scale and size and of a design that would reflect the local surroundings.
- A similar extension of the proposed design had been built with planning permission at 55 Longstone Park. The physical presence and design could be seen and was not visually obtrusive nor had an overbearing impact on neighbouring uses.
- The design was of a high quality and was in full accordance with Policy 5 of

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the North Northumberland Coastal Neighbourhood Plan.

- The proposal made great effort to preserve and mirror the character and local vernacular of the area.
- The development was considered to be of an appropriate design which would not have a significant adverse impact on the character or visual amenity of the existing dwellinghouse or the surrounding area.

Following members questions to the planning officer, the following information was provided:

- The extension was considered to be subservient to the bungalow.
- The Parish Council were made aware of the existence of an Agreement between the builder and Local Authority which prohibited the erection of any building or structure on the amenity areas. Any such restrictive covenant was not a material planning consideration.

Councillor Renner-Thompson proposed to refuse the application based on policy 5 of the North Northumberland Neighbourhood Plan. This was seconded by Councillor Hill.

Councillors Watson, Swinbank and Thorne disagreed with the motion and stated that it was a small extension, sympathetic to the host building and there was no planning reasons to refuse the application.

A vote was taken as follows: FOR; 3, AGAINST; 5, ABSTAIN; 0

The motion failed and Councillor Watson proposed to accept the officer's recommendation, this was seconded by Councillor Thorne.

A vote was taken as follows: FOR; 5, AGAINST; 3, ABSTAIN; 0.

RESOLVED that the application was **GRANTED** in line with the conditions set out in the report.

76 **APPEALS UPDATE**

RESOLVED that this was noted.

77 **SECTION 106**

RESOLVED that this was noted.

A comfort break was announced to allow officers to change over.

78 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No questions had been received.

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79 PETITIONS

- (a) No new petitions had been received.
- (b) There were no petition reports for members to discuss.
- (c) No updates on previous petitions.

80 NORTH SUNDERLAND HARBOUR COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

J. Blenkinsopp – Solicitor, introduced the report, the key issues, and the recommendations to members.

Members agreed that the interview panel should be members that had experience and understood what was required of the role. It was agreed by members that Councillors Hill, Mather and Watson would make up the interview panel.

RESOLVED that:

1. Members received the report.
2. Members agreed an interview panel of Councillor Hill, Councillor Mather and Councillor Watson to interview suitable prospective candidates for the two vacant posts of Harbour Commissioners.
3. Members agreed that the Council’s Monitoring Officer in consultation with the interview panel (as agreed above) would set up the selection and interview process.
4. Members agreed that the interview panel would make the final recommendations for the two Harbours Commissioner’s appointments to the committee for approval.

81 LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

Highways

Resurfacing

The surfacing gang had completed 14 out of the 18 LTP schemes in the North of the county and had started work on the additional 8 schemes from the 2022 Highways Investment Programme – U and C roads.

Since the last Local Area Council, the following schemes had been completed:

- Fallowden to Rock
- Preston Towers to Ellingham School
- Magdalene Fields, Warkworth
- Harwood Village
- Elyhaugh, near Longframlington

A tender was due to go out regarding the landslip at Todstead near Weldon Bridge with a view to start work in Spring 2023, but temporary repairs would be completed before work commenced proper.

Maintenance

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The team was preparing for the winter increase in pothole and flooding complaints but inspectors had been keeping on top of their inspection routes.

The Northumberland County Council Highways Maintenance team had been shortlisted for an award by APSE – Association for Public Service Excellence, as one of the best performers in the Country.

Winter Services

The response team was in place to cover roughly 40% of the network.

Members had received a briefing note from the Highways Delivery Manager on the Winter works scheme prior to the meeting.

Following questions from members, the following information was provided:

- The cost of materials had increased by 25% due to the Cost of Living crisis and were expected to rise again.

Members thanked Graham and the team for their continued hard work.

Local Services

Grass Cutting

Grass cutting had ended for the year and the team had achieved the core cut target of 10 out of 12.

Weed Control

The Local Services team would take the opportunity to review the effectiveness of the 2022 weed control programme with a view to improve on the 2023 season.

Street Sweeping

To prevent localised flooding, leaf hotspot areas had been located and work had commenced. Requests were attended to, over and above the hot spot areas.

Winter Works

The winter works programme had started for the season. Core works were to be carried out first then the team would move onto the prioritised list of requests.

Waste Services

Residual, Recycling and Garden waste collection services were operating well. Garden waste collections would end November/December. Income from garden waste exceeded the target, however demand for the service was slowing. Income from commercial waste and bulk collections were exceeding targets.

Teams would continue to review existing collection rounds in order to cope with

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ingoing housing growth as well as continued growth in take up of the garden waste service.

The kerbside glass recycling scheme trial was continuing, allowing more data to be collected on volume, service efficient and participation rates.

A food trial had also started, operated from the Morpeth Depot, which would be a weekly kerbside collection in a small caddy rather than a wheelie bin. A specialist vehicle had been brought in for the trial and it was similar to the glass trial. A compact trial was deliberately designed to keep costs as low as possible while still including the required demographic groups for essential data gathering.

Members thanked Bob and the Local Services team for their continued hard work.

RESOLVED that this was noted.

82 **SPACE FOR SHOREBIRDS**

R. Willis – Senior Wildlife Ranger, introduced himself to members and provided a presentation on the Northumberland County Council’s ranger service protecting the birds and grassland of the Northumberland Coast.

Shorebirds of the Northumberland Coast

Northumberland housed internationally important shorebirds populations, the birds would spend the majority of the year in Northumberland and then travel to the arctic circle to breed, however there had been regional declines since 2000, including the Purple Sandpiper which had had a 39% decline. A few as ten disturbances whilst in roost could result in loss of condition.

Coastal Mitigation Service

Natural England had stressed the need for the Council to address disturbances where they occurred. This was difficult for developers to do themselves and was why there was a need for a Council led strategic approach. Northumberland County Council and Natural England were confident that the service addressed issues at no cost to the council tax payers.

Following feedback from developers, it had provided certainty and a known fixed cost rather than the previous system which did not provide any benefit to the birds.

Space for Shorebirds in Action

The main role of the three Space for Shorebirds officers were to engage and educate the public. The rangers talked to beach users about the birds that were using the shore and use telescopes to engage the public to discuss the birds feeding or roosting which may be in a vulnerable position and at risk of disturbance.

The rangers deployed temporary signage when they were on the site to make the public aware of shorebirds potentially nesting and feeding on the shore and also

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hand out leaflets which contained information about the service, guidance and the types of birds most likely to be seen on the Northumberland Coast, it also contained social media and contact details.

The Space for Shorebirds service carried out social media work as part of their engagement and took photos of the birds while on site to tell shorebird stories to a larger audience. The service also engaged the public with their Shorebirds for beginners events, which were held in various locations along the coast, to allow a two-way conversation between beach users and rangers.

Dog Rangers

Approximately 50% of bird disturbances involved a dog.

The Dog Ranger pledge provided a positive way to engage with dog owners and the community of dog owners that also loved nature.

The dog ranger pledge included:

- Give Birds Space, About 40-50m
- Please Dogs, Never Chase the Birds
- Follow Signage and Requests by Rangers
- When Crossing the Dunes Keep to The Main Path to Avoid Getting Tangled in Pirri Pirri Bur

Collaboration

The Space for Shorebird service collaborated with many organisations to discuss various items such as wet grassland mapping, Pirri Pirri bur, disturbance issues and nest protection. The service also worked alongside some Northumberland schools to engage children in the work being undertaken by Rangers.

Breeding Bird Protection

The long-term aim of the Space for Shorebirds programme was to find alternative Little Tern sites with an immediate aim to reduce disturbance to breeding Ringed Plover. The service also took part in coast wide surveys for shore nesting birds and created nest protection areas using netting and signage and had relied on Coast Care volunteers to conduct surveys and assist with the nest protection work.

Dune Grasslands

The Dune grasslands were internationally important, and the service were trying to reduce the spread of Pirri Pirri Bur by people and dogs, by promoting awareness of the County's Dune grassland ecosystems and encouraging people to stay on main paths when crossing Dunes. Volunteers had been removing Pirri Pirri Bur by hand in Cocklawburn, Bamburgh and Duridge Bay.

Following the presentation from R. Willis, members were invited to ask questions of the service. The following information was provided:

- Rangers had enforcement powers but had found that they were not necessary, and the public had been more receptive to rangers asking for

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- dogs to put on a lead.
- Temporary signage was used when the team were operational in the area.

Members thanked Richard for attending the meeting and the Space for Shorebirds rangers for their continued hard work.

RESOLVED that the information was noted.

83 **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

As the meeting approached the 3 hour limit Members were asked if they wished to suspend standing orders in order to continue the meeting. Upon being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED that in accordance with the Council's constitution, standing orders be suspended and the meeting continue over the 3 hour limit.

84 **HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING**

The report provided information for Members on the service provision for residents who were homeless or at risk of homelessness in Northumberland and provided an outline of the key data and services available for people rough sleeping. J Stewart, Strategic Housing Manager was in attendance to provide an introduction to the report and answer questions from Members.

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

- There was a need for social housing and temporary accommodation in the North and the West of the county.
- There were some people who were known to the housing team but did not want to be accommodated as they felt safer.
- Most cases would be offered temporary accommodation within a few days.
- Mortgage providers had a duty to inform the local authority if a person was in threat of a repossession, the local authority would then contact the person and offer help.
- Northumberland Communities Together could direct people to further support if required.

Members thanked Julie for attending the meeting and for the Housing Services team for their continued hard work.

RESOLVED that the information was noted

85 **LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED that this was noted.

86 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

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The next meeting of the North Northumberland Local Area Council was scheduled for Thursday, 22 December 2022 at St James URC, Pottergate, Alnwick, NE66 1JW

RESOLVED that this was noted.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

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