

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At the meeting of the **North Northumberland Local Area Council** held at Main Hall - St James's URC, Pottergate, Alnwick, NE66 1JW on Thursday, 19 January 2023 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT

G Castle (Chair) (in the Chair)

MEMBERS

S Bridgett
T Clark
W Pattison
C Seymour
M Mather

T Thorne
G Hill
G Renner-Thompson
J Watson
M Swinbank

OTHER COUNCILLORS

Cllr G Sanderson

OFFICERS

J Blenkinsopp
H Booker

G Bucknall
B Hodgson
P Jones
R Little
E Scott
J Sharp

Solicitor
Principal Highways Development
Management Officer
Highways Delivery Area Manager
Neighbourhood Services Area Manager
Service Director - Local Services
Assistant Democratic Services Officer
Built Heritage and Design Officer
Senior Planning Officer

Around 30 members of the press and public were present.

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98 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Hardy and Hunter.

99 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the North Northumberland Local Area Council held on Thursday, 24 November 2022, as circulated, were confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the North Northumberland Local Area Council held on Thursday, 22 December 2022, as circulated, were confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

100 **DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor Hill stated that she was a member of the Berwick Civic Society but did not sit on the planning committee and therefore had a personal but non-prejudicial interest in planning applications 21/02292/FUL and 21/02293/LBC, she had also spoken to all parties regarding planning application 22/01098/FUL but had expressed no public view and had an open mind.

Councillor Seymour stated that she was also a member of the Berwick Civic Society and had a personal but non-prejudicial interest in planning applications 21/02292/FUL and 21/02293/LBC

Councillor Castle declared that he had a personal and prejudicial interest in planning applications 22/03343/FUL and 22/03344/LBC and would leave the room while the items were discussed and voted on.

101 **BUDGET 2023-24 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

A presentation was provided by Councillor Sanderson, Leader which gave information on the State of the County reflecting on the work the Council were undertaking based on the Council's priorities of providing value for money, tackling inequalities and delivering growth and jobs. A copy of the presentation would be filed with the signed minutes of the meeting and uploaded to the Committee papers on the Council's website.

Following consultation with residents a number of park commemoration schemes had been announced to form a countywide celebration of the life of the late Queen Elizabeth II. Information on what the Council was doing to help address inequalities in health and education, with the belief that all children should be offered the same opportunity in life to flourish, and the financial support being offered to those people most in need were outlined. The response by residents and communities to an appeal for donations to support Ukrainian nationals had been tremendous. The Council's current Capital Programme included over £806m investment in 2022-2026 to ensure that the infrastructure and facilities

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were provided to drive future growth and job creation within the County along with further investments through the Borderlands Partnership and North of Tyne Combined Authority.

The Council was continuing to invest in education and skills with a number of capital projects coming forward to in relation to schools within the Coquet, Berwick and Seaton Valley areas along with other educational facilities to grow the skills needed by local employers and industries. At the last focussed visit held in July 2022 in relation to children's social work Ofsted had found many positives in the Council's practice and procedures and in April 2022 88% of the County's schools were judged to be good or better.

The commitment to maintain frontline services had remained with increased funding for highway maintenance in 2022-23, however the recent bad weather had impacted on the number of defects on the road network being reported. The Council had been praised for its work in supporting people requiring care packages after being discharged from hospital and was grateful for staff who provided this service. There was always a need to attract more care workers and travel allowances had been increased to try to encourage more people into this sector.

A new Chief Executive was due to start at the Council on 8 February 2023 and recruitment was also underway for a new Executive Team. The Corporate Plan was to be refreshed to drive improvements in all services and a Strategic Change Programme developed to deliver the things that were most important to residents in a cost-effective way. It was hoped that compulsory redundancies could be avoided, but this could not be guaranteed. The recently announced Government settlement had been better than expected and new legislation would give the Council more power to address issues related to second or vacant homes and the pressure this put on some communities. There would still be inflationary pressures on the budget going forward in relation to pay and other factors. Details of the proposed budget would be released at the beginning of February and all Members would be invited to the Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 13 February 2023.

RESOLVED that this was noted.

102 **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.

Members noted that in Councillor Hardy's absence, Councillor Castle would chair the planning business of the meeting as well as the local area business. Councillor Castle proposed that Councillor Thorne would chair planning applications 22/03343/FUL and 22/03344/LBC as he had a personal and prejudicial interest in these matters, this was agreed by the committee.

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RESOLVED that this was noted.

103 **21/02292/FUL**

Conversion of former community building to create 9no. flats, with construction of 1no. new house and garage block to rear (as amended) 5 Palace Street East, Berwick-Upon-Tweed, Northumberland, TD15 1HT

J. Sharp – Senior Planning Officer, introduced the application to members with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation and gave the following updates:

- There had been a late representation from the Victorian Society objecting to the demolition of the Spier & Co. of the Glasgow hut, this had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.
- There had also been a late representation from the Twentieth Century Society objecting to the demolition of the Armstrong hut, this had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.

E. Convey spoke in objection to the application and gave the committee the following information:

- There had been strong objections to the gross overdevelopment of a sensitive conservation area planned for the grounds at the back.
- The proposed garage was 72ft long and both new builds were 21ft high and would be an eyesore, projecting over the town walls.
- The site would tower over the neighbouring properties and invade privacy to the homes on the opposite side.
- The Armstrong hut and the Spiers classroom were important listed buildings.
- The new builds would detract from the long-established open landscape and would not be a positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness of the area.
- The plans had included a motorcycle workshop, which would produce overwhelming noise, dirt and fumes. The applicant had removed the motorcycle workshop but that did not exclude the possible establishment for one at a later time.
- A condition should be added that no motorbike workshop should be allowed on the site, on the grounds that the noise and fumes would be extremely detrimental to the mental health and well-being of anyone living in the area.
- The suggested hours for any workshop noise of 8am-6pm every weekday was hardly any restriction and needed to be considerably reduced.
- The development, the overshadowing, the invasion of privacy and the likelihood of intrusive noise would interfere with the enjoyment of neighbouring properties and should not be allowed.

G. Davies spoke on behalf of Berwick Town Council and gave the committee the following information:

- In the absence of a user or developer willing to take the building on, it would not stay preserved and would rot away.
- The building had been subject to weather, vermin and to vandals which no listed building consent could prevent.
- The residents of Berwick agreed that something must be done with the building, but the options were limited.

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- There was a suggestion of donating the listed buildings.
- There would be no conservation without some form of development.
- The potential for nuisance noise was a statutory matter which would be addressed under the existing laws relating to nuisance.
- The public benefit would arise from the accommodation that would be provided by the development.
- Berwick Town Council were in support of the application.

J. Bell spoke in support of the application and gave the committee the following information:

- Berwick Youth Project was an important part of the Northumberland County Councils youth service and delivered the county's service in Berwick under and SLA agreement between 2006 to 2021.
- Over the last twelve years, over £1,000,000 had been lost from funding in the Berwick and Boulmer area.
- Since 1997, the service had given over 270 young persons a chance to become responsible householders and understand what was needed for independent living.
- The condition of the building was poor and had sustained substantial damage and theft of materials.
- The project had only been able to be developed so far due to donations from the Architectural Heritage Fund and the Community Red Housing Fund.
- The spend so far had been £71,000 with little to show for it.
- Northumberland County Council should waive the Section 106 contribution condition.
- There had been an exaggeration of the motorcycle workshop.

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

- The proposed development would project over slightly but would blend in with the roof lines.
- The roof lights of the development would be at an angle.
- The listed buildings were curtilage listed and there was a condition placed on the application that those buildings were to be recorded if they were unable to be saved and relocated.
- Planning conditions had to be necessary to make a development acceptable and had to be directly related to the development and reasonable in scale and kind to the development.
- Covenants were not a material consideration.
- A condition could be added to phase the works to the development.

Councillor Seymour proposed to defer the application on the grounds that there were late objectors and that in her opinion the application needed to be split into two separate applications. Following legal advice that Councillor Seymour needed to consider the applications as they were before her and that deferrals are usually for further information or site visits not to seek alternative planning applications, Councillor Seymour withdrew her proposal to defer the application and made a proposal to refuse the application on potential harm to a Grade II listed building, visual impact and removal of heritage assets, with exact wording delegated to officers. This was not seconded and the motion to refuse failed.

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Councillor Bridgett proposed to accept the recommendation with an additional condition to phase the building works and that works to the huts should not start until first occupancy of the main Georgian building, with exact wording of the condition to be delegated to the director of planning in consultation with the chair of planning, this was seconded by Councillor Thorne who stated that it was the right decision for Berwick and asked to add a note to the applicant to take reasonable steps to preserve the huts. The addition of a note to the applicant was agreed by Councillor Bridgett

A vote was taken as follows: FOR; 10, AGAINST; 0, ABSTAIN; 1.

RESOLVED that the application was **GRANTED** subject to a S106 legal agreement securing Coastal Mitigation (£6150) and Open Space contributions (£12,494.34) in line with the conditions set out in the report, and a further condition dealing with phasing the building works and that works to the huts should not start until first occupancy of the main Georgian building with the exact wording delegated to the director of planning in consultation with the chair of planning and a note to the applicant to take reasonable steps to preserve the hut.

A 5-minute comfort break was announced.

104 **21/02293/LBC**

Listed Building Consent: Conversion of former community building to create 9no. flats, with construction of 1no. new house and garage block to rear (as amended)

5 Palace Street East, Berwick-Upon-Tweed, Northumberland, TD15 1HT

J. Sharp – Senior Planning Officer, introduced the application.

J Bell spoke in support of the application and gave the following information:

- The applicant had engaged with several historical museums about the relocation of the huts, and they had declined to accept the huts.
- The applicant would reuse and repair the huts as much as possible.
- The garage and workshop would be for a training room and would also be used for the storage of canoes and other equipment.

Councillor Bridgett proposed to accept the recommendation, this was seconded by Councillor Thorne.

A vote was taken as follows: FOR; 10, AGAINST; 0, ABSTAIN; 1.

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

105 **22/01098/FUL**

Proposed new self/custom build dwelling and annexed accommodation. Horncliffe County First School, Tofts Lane, Horncliffe, Berwick-Upon-Tweed, Northumberland TD15 2XR

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J. Sharp – Senior Planning Officer, introduced the application with the aid of a PowerPoint Presentation and gave the following updates:

- Additional six representations had been received in support of the proposals, these related to the removal of the old school building and some consider the design of the proposed dwelling acceptable.

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

- The site was a brownfield site where the applicant had already constructed six semi-detached affordable bungalows for rent.
- The applicant would utilise the current reinforced concrete floor, which would save hundreds of tons of concrete being dug up and transported.
- The application would use existing utility services already on site.
- The existing roadways would be maintained as well as hard standing parking with was on site with drainage.
- Materials were locally sourced from local firms with facing stone from the local quarry.
- The structure of the building would be utilised during the build negating the need to have additional portacabins for the site workers.
- Daylight would not be restricted due to the site orientation.
- There would be a low impact from street view due to the current mature trees in the existing garden.
- The application was for a family dwelling offering independent support for elderly relatives.

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

- The separation distance to the neighbouring properties was 13m in some places and 6m at the nearest, whereas the industry standard was 21m.
- There was potential and concerns for overbearing and overlooking into the neighbouring properties.
- The planning officer believed a better design could be achieved.
- The desire to demolish the existing school building was not a material consideration.

Councillor Patterson proposed to grant the application saying that she did not believe the design was of poor standard, this was seconded by Councillor Hill.

Councillor Thorne stated that he was against the planning application and that the application was too close to the existing bungalows and that it did not fit in with the local surroundings, this was agreed by Councillors Watson, Swinbank and Castle.

A vote was taken as follows: FOR; 3, AGAINST; 7, ABSTAIN; 1.

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

A vote was taken as follows: FOR; 6, AGAINST; 3, ABSTAIN; 2.

RESOLVED that the application was **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

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1. Design

By virtue of its design, massing and scale the proposal would result in an incongruous and inappropriate form of development that would not make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and would not integrate well into the surrounding area. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy QOP 1 of the Northumberland Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. Impact on Amenity

By virtue of its scale, design and close location to existing properties at Hair Court, the proposed development would have a detrimental impact upon neighbouring amenity. The proposed development would therefore not accord with Policy QOP 2 of the Northumberland Local Plan or the National Planning Policy Framework.

106 **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.

*Councillor Castle left the meeting at this point.
Councillor Thorne took the chair.*

107 **22/03343/FUL**

**Alteration and refurbishment to accommodate Bailiffgate Museum. Install external access ramp. Remove escape stairs. New main entrance to North with new stair, new platform lift and glazed infills to enclose the arched openings. Installation of a Mezzanine including stair access and lift. Raising of chandeliers. Refurbishment of second floor to create meeting/storage area. Redecorate original entrance.
Northumberland Hall, Market Street, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 1SS**

J. Sharp – Senior Planning Officer, introduced the application with the aid of a PowerPoint Presentation and gave the following update:

- The removal of conditions 4 and 6 from the recommendation.

J. Humphrys spoke in support of the application and gave the committee the following information:

- The Bailiffgate Museum had around 10,000 visitors each year, they ran an education programme providing loan boxes and talks for schools and community groups from Berwick to Gateshead and had a strong outreach programme to capture the history and heritage of Alnwick and the districts

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around the town.

- The museum had outgrown its current building.
- The ambition was to create a dynamic and inclusive cultural and creative hub in the heart of Alnwick, building on local skills, pride, and confidence and to provide a catalyst for the regeneration of the town.
- The aim was to retain the significant historical features of the building, ensuring that it complied with modern standards and take a sensitive approach to make minimum intervention.
- Ramps and lifts would make the building accessible to all.
- Refitting and glazing the “fish market portico” would give the building a highly visible entrance and a space in which to show museum exhibits.
- The inclusion of a lightweight mezzanine floor, which could be removed with minimal harm to the building.
- The applicant would re-use materials where possible and would keep the integrity of its Grade I listing.
- There would be a retail unit available on the ground floor and a meeting space to rent on the third floor to provide a regular income.
- The proposals provided the opportunity to give the building a long term, sustainable future through a new use that would bring more people into the building each day.
- The fabric of the building would be made good, and its energy efficiency improved.
- The application site would be flexible to allow for a range of purposes for the community and visitors.

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

- The public were still able to access the public toilets on the other side of the building.

Councillor Watson proposed to accept the officers recommendation to grant the application including the removal of conditions 4 and 6, and the inclusion of an informative or condition in respect of the cover for the cycle rack not being required, with the exact wording to be delegated to the Director of Planning, this was seconded by Councillor Bridgett.

A vote was taken as follows: FOR; 9, AGAINST; 0, ABSTAIN; 1.

RESOLVED that the application was **GRANTED** subject to the conditions outlined in the report and the removal of conditions 4 and 6 and the inclusion of an informative in respect of the cover for the cycle rack not being required.

Councillor Bridgett left the meeting.

108

23/03344/LBC

Listed Building Consent for alteration and refurbishment to accommodate Bailiffgate Museum. Install external access ramp. Remove escape stairs. New main entrance to North with new stair, new platform lift and glazed infills to enclose the arched openings. Installation of a Mezzanine including stair access and lift. Raising of chandeliers. Refurbishment of second floor

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**to create meeting/storage area. Redecorate original entrance.
Northumberland Hall, Market Street, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 1SS**

J. Sharp introduced the application, there were no updates and no questions from members to the planning officer.

Councillor Watson proposed to accept the officers recommendation, this was seconded by Councillor Pattison.

A vote was taken as follows: FOR; 8, AGAINST; 0, ABSTAIN; 1.

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

*Councillor Castle returned to the meeting.
Councillor Patterson left the meeting.*

Councillor Castle in the Chair.

109 **APPEALS UPDATE**

RESOLVED that this was noted.

110 **HIGHWAYS UPDATE**

H. Booker - Principal Highways Development Management Officer gave a presentation to the committee regarding sustainability in highways and transport terms, and included the following topics:

- What did the term “sustainable development” mean for NCC?
- Principles of Sustainable Development
- National Planning Policy Framework
- Highways Key Local Plan Policies
- Policy TRA 1: Promoting Sustainable Connections
- What sustainably means in terms of highways and transportation?
- Conclusions

Following the presentation members were invited to ask questions of the highways officer, the following information was then provided:

- When reviewing a planning application, the highways officers would look at several different things to judge on whether it would be sustainable, such as bus services, other regular public transport or whether the occupants of the application would be over reliant on cars.
- Transport requirements were being looked at more than they were in past planning applications, due to the updated policies in central government along with the NPPF and the new Northumberland Local Plan.
- Members were able to add conditions to a planning application that EV chargers must be present in the development, as well as bike connectivity in larger applications.
- The differing highways departments in Northumberland County Council

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were aware that there were contradicting views on some aspects of sustainability and work was underway to provide a more joined up approach.

- New Local Plan policies were trying to initiate conversations with developers to encourage less reliance on this type of travel
- An objection from Highways on the ground of sustainability could be used to initiate a conversation with the applicant to encourage them to think about other sustainable mitigation such as EV chargers at new developments.

Members thanked Hannah for the presentation.

A copy of the presentation was included with the minutes.

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

111 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions had been received.

112 PETITIONS

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

Councillor Hill and Councillor Seymour left the meeting.

113 LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

Highways

G. Bucknall – Highways Delivery Area Manager provided an update on highways.

Resurfacing

Due to the cold snap in December followed by the Christmas break, not many resurfacing schemes had been completed - Hilary Close, Longhoughton and a few roads in the Guyzance area had been completed.

The next schemes to complete were A6698 to New Bewick and the widening of the A697 to Branton Road.

The LPT programme in the North had Dene Drive, Berwick and A1 to Lucker outstanding alongside another three U and C roads.

Maintenance

The severe weather variations had caused a large spike in potholes, the

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Highways inspectors and response gangs had been continually working to attend potholes, however due to the fluctuations in the weather more potholes were expected.

Winter Services

Gritters had constantly been out and treating routes, primary routes had been attended to twice daily and secondary routes once a day, as well as prioritising any areas on request.

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

Local Services

Waste Services

The refuse collection service had worked well over the Christmas period with no complaints received in relation to the dates of collection. Staff had worked with the organisation to ensure that some houses that had been given incorrect collection dates due to a printer error were informed of the correct revised dates via leaflets and a targeted social media campaign.

Dedicated refuse staff in the North collected over 163 tonnes of recycling waste week commencing 26th December and also collected over 596 tonnes of residual waste week commencing 2nd January.

Grounds Maintenance

The team were continuing with the winter works programme and were confident that they would be able to complete all outstanding works. Progress through the programme had been impacted due to the team being deployed to the winter gritting services to support Highways colleagues during the recent prolonged period of ice/snow.

Leaf clearance was close to being completed but had slowed due to weather.

Glass Trial Update

The glass trial was continuing as per November's update and the team were assessing the frequency of the collections in some areas.

Food Trial Update

The food trial started week commencing 21st November with a 10-month trial in the central area with a weekly collection of 4,800 properties in the trial areas. The trial was operating from Morpeth depot only due to the cost of dedicated vehicles and staffing, during the trial rates and average weights would be monitored with a report on the findings of the trial provided for members at the end of the trial period.

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

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RESOLVED that this was noted.

Councillor Mather left the meeting.

114 **COASTAL SUMMIT FEEDBACK - SUMMER 2022**

P. Jones – Service Director - Local Services gave a presentation to the committee around the feedback given from the Visitor Management Arrangements in Summer 2022, and included the following topics:

- Background and Context
- Key Objectives
- “Love it Like It’s Yours” – Community Campaign
- Parking and Transport
- Street Cleansing and Public Toilet Provision
- Fly Camping and Motorcaravans
- Destination Management Plan

Following the presentation members were invited to ask questions regarding the presentation, the following information was then provided:

- Changes were made during the trial in response to concerns raised by some users, which resulted in the space between motorhomes being increased to 3m. This change had been accommodated within Beadnell and Bamburgh but had affected the capacity at Amble.
- A planning application would be submitted in due course to enable the motorhome pilot scheme to become a permanent arrangement at the three car parks.

Members thanked Paul for the presentation.

A copy of the presentation was included with the minutes.

RESOLVED that this was noted.

115 **LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED that this was noted.

116 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the North Northumberland Local Area Council was scheduled for Thursday, 23 February 2023 at St James URC, Pottergate, Alnwick, NE66 1JW

RESOLVED that this was noted.

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CHAIR.....

DATE.....

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