

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

At the meeting of the **North Northumberland Local Area Committee** held at MAIN HALL, WARKWORTH WAR MEMORIAL HALL, 40 CASTLE ST, WARKWORTH, MORPETH NE65 0UN on Thursday, 27 July 2023 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT

G Castle (Chair)
(in the Chair)

MEMBERS

T Clark
G Hill
M Swinbank

C Hardy
I Hunter
T Thorne

OFFICERS

G Bucknall
Easton
B Hodgson
R Little
N Masson

Highways Delivery Area Manager
Public Transport Manager
Neighbourhood Services Area Manager
Assistant Democratic Services Officer
Legal Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

E Ross

Stronger Shores

Around 25 members of the public were present.

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1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Bridgett, Mather, Pattison, Seymour, and Watson.

2 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Hardy explained that he had a personal and prejudicial interest in item 10 of the agenda and would leave the room while the item was discussed.

RESOLVED that this was noted.

3 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Questions from Berwick Town Council had been received via email and a written response would be provided from officers.

Q.

L Long – Swarland & Newton Action on Climate (SNAC), asked whether NCC could explain how verge cutting contributed to increasing plant life diversity and whether it was consistent with good verge guidelines.

A.

B. Hodgson - Neighbourhood Services Area Manager, explained that NCC did follow good verge guidelines from Plantlife and aimed to cut verges annually and would leave areas upon request however would cut specific verges if they impacted on sightlines.

Q.

M. Wyllie – Rotary Amble & Warkworth, asked who determines which sightlines were planned to be cut.

A.

B. Hodgson - Neighbourhood Services Area Manager, explained that verges were mapped on a digital system however he would be happy to meet with local residents and organisations to discuss particular verges.

RESOLVED that this was noted.

4 PETITIONS

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

5 LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

Highways

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Resurfacing

Five schemes in the North had been complete in the new year's LTP, those were:

- Billendean Roundabout
- Highcliffe Estate, Spittal
- Netherton Burnfoot
- A1068 Hipsburn towards Warkworth
- Dean Drive, Berwick

Maintenance

The gang had been working through the extensive list of drainage and minor flooding issues along with replacing road signs however the allocated funds were likely to run out before completing the full list.

The pothole trial had started in North Northumberland as well as Tynedale, so a contractor had been posted in with a hotbox, planer and roller cutting out and squaring off potholes. In the trial period, they would be concentrating on A & B class roads and would assess productivity in three months.

The Highways Inspectors and NCC response gangs had continued to work on emergency potholes or any that were not suitable for the contractor.

Fix My Street had been launched and councillors were asked to encourage members of the public to report issues through the new system.

Following the update from G. Bucknall – Lead Highways Delivery Manager, members were invited to ask questions, in which the following information was provided:

- Potholes were only actionable if they were a minimum of 40mm deep or at least 300mm in diameter.

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

Local Services

Waste Service

Residual, Recycling, and bulky waste collection services had continued to perform well. A review of routes had taken place which had resulted in a change of collection day for over 4000 households, all households affected were in the southeast and were sent a leaflet informing them of the new collection date and were provided with a calendar showing future collection dates.

Garden waste services had also been performing well, and the Neighbourhood Services team were planning to review the service at the end of the season to look for efficiencies. There had been 194 new customers join the programme to make a total of 5808 customers in the North area.

Grass Cutting

The majority of the teams were onto cut seven of the season, with some days

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being lost due to the poor weather however the team were confident that they would hit their target number of cuts for the season.

Weed Control

All areas had received the first weed treatment and the second treatments had been started in areas.

Members thanked Bob and the team for their ongoing challenging work.

RESOLVED that this was noted.

6 **NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES PRESENTATION**

B. Hodgson - Neighbourhood Services Area Manager gave the committee a presentation covering general information on grass cutting, along with challenges faced by the teams and information on weed control.

Following the presentation, elected members and public were invited to ask questions. The following information was then provided:

- NCC used chemicals around the base of trees to reduce the need to trim the areas as resources were limited, the chemicals used would usually last for approximately three months, which the risk of damage to trees.
- Parish and Town councils were able to identify areas where grass areas did not need to be cut as often and work with the Neighbourhood Services team to ensure a balance of safety and biodiversity.
- NCC were reviewing ways in which cut grass was displaced.

Members thanked Bob for the presentation.

RESOLVED that this was noted.

7 **STRONGER SHORES**

E. Ross – Stronger Shores was in attendance and gave members a presentation on the Stronger Shores project, this included information on National Policy, objectives of the project, Natural Capital along with sites and types of research each site was undertaking.

Following the presentation, elected members and public were invited to ask questions. The following information was then provided:

- Due to funding constraints the boundary ran to Lindisfarne however Stronger Shores would be working with Berwick Marine Partnership.
- The project would be working with Northumbria Water.

Members thanked Emily for attending, and for the information on the Stronger Shores project and requested that the slides and contact information to be emailed to members and Parish Councils after the meeting.

RESOLVED that this was noted.

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8 NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL BUS BOARD

N. Easton - Public Transport Manager gave a brief summary of the report and invited members to nominate a member to represent the North Northumberland Area in a Northumberland Bus Board committee.

After a brief discussion, Councillor Swinbank was nominated to represent the North Northumberland area, this was agreed by members.

RESOLVED that Councillor Swinbank would be the North Northumberland representative for the Local Bus Board.

9 APPOINTMENTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

The following change was made to the North Northumberland Outside Bodies:

- The removal of Councillor Castle to sit on Alwick Sporting Club. Councillor Castle had advised that it was no longer running.

RESOLVED that this was noted.

Councillor Hardy left the meeting at this point.

10 NORTH SUNDERLAND HARBOUR COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

N. Masson – Head of Legal Services, introduced the report to members and provided an update and outlined the proposed next steps with regard to Council's appointment of two Harbour Commissioners to the North Sunderland Harbours Commission.

Councillor Castle proposed to accept both recommendations, which was seconded by Councillor Thorne. A vote was taken and was unanimous.

RESOLVED that

1. That members ratified the composition of the interview panel consisting solely of Councillor Hill.
2. Kerren Rodgers and James Boulton were appointed as Harbour Commissioners to the North Sunderland Harbour Commission for a period of 3 years under the North Sunderland Harbour Order 1931.

Councillor Hardy returned to the meeting at this point.

11 LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED that this was noted.

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12 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

RESOLVED that the next meeting of the North Northumberland Local Area was noted as Thursday, 28 September 2023.

RESOLVED that this was noted.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

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