

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**

**TYNEDALE LOCAL AREA COUNCIL**

At a virtual meeting of the **Tynedale Local Area Council** held on Tuesday, 9 March 2021 at 2.00 p.m.

**PRESENT**

Councillor T Cessford

(Chair, in the Chair for agenda items 191 - 194 and 201 - 206)

(Planning Vice-Chair Councillor R Gibson in the chair for items 195 - 200)

**MEMBERS**

A Dale  
CR Homer  
C Horncastle  
I Hutchinson  
D Kennedy  
N Oliver

K Quinn  
JR Riddle  
A Sharp  
G Stewart  
K Stow

**OFFICERS**

K Blyth  
  
M Bulman  
R Campbell  
M Haworth  
D Hunt

A Olive  
E Sinnamon  
N Snowdon

N Turnbull

Planning Area Manager -  
Development Management  
Solicitor  
Senior Planning Officer  
Planning Officer  
Area Manager (West),  
Neighbourhood Services  
Highways Delivery Area Manager  
Development Service Manager  
Principal Programme Officer  
(Highways Improvement)  
Democratic Services Officer

**ALSO PRESENT**

Inspector Garry Neil, Northumbria Police

**191. PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED AT A VIRTUAL STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Ch.'s Initials.....

The Chair advised members of the procedure which would be followed at the virtual meeting and of the changes to the public speaking protocol.

## 192. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Tynedale Local Area Council held on 12 January 2021, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

## 193. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Riddle declared a personal and prejudicial interest in planning application 21/00070/FUL as the application was in his name.

## 194. POLICING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE

The Chair welcomed Inspector Garry Neil to the meeting to give an overview and answer questions about policing in the East and West Tynedale command areas.

Inspector Neil explained that he had been appointed as the Neighbourhood Inspector for Tynedale in September 2020 following Inspector Bridges retirement. He highlighted the following:

- A new resourcing model had been implemented by Northumbria Police at the beginning of 2020 which had seen a 40% increase in resources in the rural area. This included the creation of a Rural Crime Team, for which he was the Inspector. The team included a sergeant, 2 detective constables, 3 constables and a civilian analyst. They concentrated on poaching, plant and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) theft. Significant results had recently been achieved with an organised crime group located in Stocksfield, Prudhoe and South Shields; a number of warrants had been executed and plant recovered.
- 50 rural crime volunteers had been recruited, mainly in the west, and more were being actively sought. Training was provided on reporting incidents, evidence required, grading of risk and radio training.
- Statistics were provided for the previous 12-month period and how these had changed due to Covid:
  - The number of incidents had reduced by 4,444 (11%) crimes in the Northern Area Command.
  - **East Tynedale** – 5% increase in offences violence against the person primarily without injury (harassment, stalking, public order offences). Reduction in burglary dwelling 40 offences less (36%). Anti-social behaviour had increased by 100% with residents reporting neighbours for having visitors when covid restrictions were in place and for travelling to rural locations.
  - 34% and 40% increase in domestic abuse in East and West Tynedale respectively due to relationships breaking down and individuals

spending more time at home together and relationships breaking down due to this and child access issues.

- **West Tynedale** – 14% reduction in overall crime, 20% increase violence against the person (60 offences), vehicle crime down 60%, burglaries down 50%.
- Priorities included:
  - Staff coverage and availability of staff due to the individual or family member needing to shield, or having to self-isolate due to testing positive for Covid.
  - Investigating reports of visitors.
  - Speeding.
  - Vulnerability and sex offender visits.
  - Domestic abuse victims who all received a safeguarding follow up call.

Members of the Committee discussed a number of issues and responses were given as follows:

- The Inspector agreed that staff or cameras would be deployed to investigate concerns or public perception of speeding in the following areas: Allendale Road and Corbridge Road in Hexham, A695 around the schools in Stocksfield, Bardon Mill.
- It was comforting to residents to see ‘bobbies on the beat’. More staff had been recruited with 40% located in rural areas, including Hexham.
- The boundary between East and West Tynedale was located to the west of Corbridge, Matfen, Ryal, Ingoe, Belsay, Kirkharle.
- A meeting was scheduled to be held the following day with colleagues from Cumbria and Durham police forces and representatives from the Forestry Commission and National Park regarding motorbikes on rural roads. This had increased during the milder weather in the last couple of weeks. These journeys could not be classed as essential whilst lockdown restrictions were in place.
- Fewer vehicles on the road meant that it was easier to spot individuals that should not be there. Use of members local improvement scheme funding to purchase ANPR cameras to protect communities from travelling criminals, traffic calming measures and speed surveys were also welcomed as it was difficult to cover a large rural area.
- He supported a reduction in speed on the A69 in the vicinity of Bardon Mill.
- The Community Speed Watch programme had not stopped during the pandemic as that type of activity was permitted under the Covid legislation but depended on whether participants were from the same household. Details of volunteers willing to register for training would be circulated by email after the meeting.
- Concerns regarding whether individuals regularly seen in Hexham were professional beggars or modern-day slaves. The police had powers under the Vagrancy Act of 1824 and Public Spaces Protection Order. They were aware of the issue and were investigating.

The Chair and members thanked Inspector Neil for attending the meeting and also for the professionalism and efficiency of his police colleagues.

**RESOLVED** that the update be received.

## **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL**

***Councillor Cessford then vacated the Chair, for Planning Vice-Chair Councillor Gibson to chair the development control section of the agenda, as was the arrangement for all Local Area Councils.***

### **195. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The committee was requested 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.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

### **196. 20/03984/FUL Resubmission: Replacement dwelling Fairfields, Lowgate, Hexham, Northumberland**

There were no questions arising from the site visit videos which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The Planning Officer introduced the application with the aid of a powerpoint presentation and advised that there were no updates following publication of the report.

N Turnbull, Democratic Services Officer, read out a statement from Parish Councillor Tom Gillanders, which would be attached to the signed minutes and uploaded to the Council's website.

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

- The report provided a synopsis of the planning history of the site. Due to the residential caravan having been in situ in excess of 20 years, the use of the caravan was immune from enforcement after 10 years, which in effect meant they had permanent consent for a residential property which could be lived in all year round.
- In accordance with Green Belt policy a replacement building for the same use would be permitted, if it was not significantly larger than the current building.

- This application could not be compared with a conversion application previously considered by the Committee, where the original building had been removed.
- The issue of whether a proposal was materially larger considered not only the percentage of floor area or volume increase, it also looked at the existing site, impact on openness, the dimensions and design of the property.
- Previous former Tynedale policies considered an increase of 33% to be a limited extension to a building in the Green Belt, however this definition was no longer used in the NPPF. A general rule now considered that something up to 50% could be considered not to be a substantial increase or a limited extension to an existing building, provided the design and issues raised above, were subordinate or not excessive. Officers did not consider the proposal to be materially larger than the existing dwelling.
- The application proposed a single-story building which was not significantly higher than the existing structure (18cm higher).
- The red line defined the curtilage of the property and did not encroach further into the Green Belt. The applicant also owned the adjacent paddock (the land outlined in blue in the power point presentation).
- All the properties surrounding the site had been notified of the planning application and a site notice had also been displayed at the site entrance to fulfil the statutory notification requirements. No objections had been received from any of the neighbours. Two letters of support had been received.
- A previous application, which had been dismissed on appeal by the Planning Inspector, had proposed a 1.5 storey building with an increase of 140% on the original dwelling. Pre-application discussions had been held which had resulted in the proposal being considered in line with comments in the Inspector's decision.
- Condition 6 proposed the removal of permitted development rights for extensions, which was common in countryside and Green Belt applications.
- The current building was visible from the road between Hexham and Lowgate but not from the adjacent highway. The view of the building was minimal; an increase in height of 18cm was not considered to have a greater impact than the existing building. There was screening to the west and north and it was not considered that the proposed building would have a greater impact on the visual amenity of the landscape than the building that currently existed.

Councillor Horncastle proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application subject to the conditions contained in the officer's report. This was seconded by Councillor Stewart and unanimously agreed.

**RESOLVED** that the application be **GRANTED** permission for the reasons and with the conditions as outlined in the report.

Councillor Riddle, having previously disclosed a personal and prejudicial interest, switched his camera off and did not participate in the following application.

**197. 21/00070/FUL**

**Replacement of redundant poultry shed with steel frame lean to agricultural building  
Blakelaw Farm, Bellingham, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 2EF**

There were no questions arising from the site visit videos which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The Senior Planning Officer introduced the application with the aid of a powerpoint presentation and advised that there were no updates following publication of the report. The application was being considered at committee as the applicant was an elected county councillor.

Councillor Kennedy proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the application, subject to the conditions contained in the officer's report. This was seconded by Councillor Hutchinson and unanimously agreed.

**RESOLVED** that the application be **GRANTED** permission for the reasons and with the conditions as outlined in the report.

**198. The Northumberland County Council (Land at Hazel Hurst, Bardon Mill, Hexham, Northumberland) Tree Preservation Order 2020 (No. 09 of 2020)**

The Senior Planning Officer introduced the report with the aid of a powerpoint presentation and advised that there were no updates following publication of the report.

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

- An application could be made to the Local Planning Authority to obtain permission if work on the trees was required in the future. There was no charge for this type of application.
- A provisional order had been made on 3 November 2020 under delegated powers following a request from a member of the public. The process required that the provisional tree preservation order be confirmed within the 6-month provisional period, otherwise it would cease to have any effect.
- The Tree and Woodlands Officer had assessed the value of the group of trees together and the impact that this had on the public realm and amenity in the area. Together they were considered to be worthy of protection to preserve the overall woodland look. If any of the trees, such as some of the birch trees which were leaning over at an angle, fell or required removal, the TPO would ensure that they would be replanted and

the positive impact of the woodland on neighbouring amenity be maintained.

- The TPO would last for perpetuity, unless modified or revoked.
- A 5-day notice process enabled a landowner to notify a Local Planning Authority if a tree was dangerous or dying and required felling. If approved the Local Planning Authority would recommend that a replacement tree be planted; the cost of replacement would lie with the landowner.

Councillor Sharp moved the recommendation to confirm provisional order 2020 (No. 09 of 2020). This was seconded by Councillor Stow and unanimously agreed.

**RESOLVED** that the Northumberland County Council (Land at Hazel Hurst, Bardon Mill, Hexham, Northumberland) Tree Preservation Order 2020 (No. 09 of 2020) be confirmed.

#### **199. The Northumberland County Council (Land North of Ostlers Cottage, Anick, Northumberland) Tree Preservation Order 2020 (No 10 of 2020)**

The Planning Area Manager - Development Management introduced the report with the aid of a powerpoint presentation. An extra slide had been included from the presentation previously circulated to show the location of the trees. She advised that there were no updates following publication of the report.

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

- Ivy on the trees had not been found to be damaging to the health or longevity of the trees by the Tree and Woodlands Officer who was happy that the requirements of a TPO were met.

Councillor Hutchinson moved the recommendation to confirm provisional order 2020 (No. 10 of 2020). This was seconded by Councillor Stewart and unanimously agreed.

**RESOLVED** that the Northumberland County Council (Land North of Ostlers Cottage, Anick, Northumberland) Tree Preservation Order 2020 (No. 10 of 2020) be confirmed.

#### **200. PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE**

The report provided information on the progress of planning appeals.

In response to a query, the Development Service Manager agreed to verify the address of an enforcement appeal, listed at the bottom of page 7 of the report, to Councillor Horncastle by email after the meeting.

Councillor Dale disclosed an interest in the above item and switched her camera off and left the debate until the discussion on the enforcement item was concluded.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

***On the conclusion of the development control business at 3.37 pm, Councillor Gibson vacated the Chair. The meeting adjourned for approximately 5 minutes. Councillor Cessford returned to the Chair and continued the meeting at 3.45 p.m.***

## **OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS**

### **201. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions from members of the public.

### **202. PETITIONS**

This item was to:

#### **a) Receive any new petitions:**

No new petitions had been received.

#### **b) Consider reports on petitions previously received:**

##### **i. Speeding Traffic on the B6318 at Chollerford**

The Local Area Council considered the petition which requested that Northumberland County Council implement traffic calming measures on the B6318 between Chollerford roundabout and Walwick. (A copy of the report is enclosed with the minutes as Appendix C.)

A statement in support of the petition from Helen McCall, the Lead Petitioner, was read out by N Turnbull, Democratic Services Officer. The statement would be attached to the signed copy of the minutes and would be uploaded to the Council's website.

The Principal Programme Officer (Highways Improvement) explained that he had been unable to arrange a site visit with the Lead Petitioner due to the restrictions in force during the Covid-19 pandemic. As these would hopefully be relaxing soon, he would arrange a socially distanced meeting outside with the Lead Petitioner and Councillor Gibson, as the local member. He commented that:

- The permanent counter was very well hidden. It was a grey box hidden in the grass verge on the southern side of the road in the extended 40-mph section next to the new housing development.
- The accident data related to the area from the roundabout to Walwick Hall and covered the previous 4/5-year period. It was obtained from Gateshead Council, who maintained accident data for all local authorities within the Northumbria Police area. The accident in 2018 was as a result of driver error. There may have been more incidents prior to this period.
- Traffic calming measures were only implemented in areas where the speed limit was 30 mph, or less. It would be very difficult to implement physical measures in an area where the speed limit was 40-mph.
- The missing signs would be investigated.
- A copy of the petition had been sent to Northumbria Police who were dealing with a new speeding enforcement strategy under their Operation Modero initiative.

In answer to a question, he confirmed that the frequency of calibration of the equipment would be checked.

Members noted that the footpath was narrower in places and it was suggested that some of the trees might have tree preservation orders on them. This would be investigated and widening and the condition of the footpath explored.

The Chair suggested that a meeting be arranged as soon as possible with the lead petitioner, and possibly virtually, in the first instance.

Councillor Gibson, the local member, confirmed that he had visited the location earlier that day and confirmed the presence of the permanent counter. He acknowledged that the stretch of road in questions was fast, straight and downhill. He recalled a motorbike fatal accident a number of years ago. Speeding had become one of the most talked about issues at meetings, but unfortunately it was difficult to prevent inconsiderate drivers.

**RESOLVED** that the issues raised in the petition and the contents of the report, be noted, including:

- a) A site visit or virtual meeting be arranged with the Lead Petitioner.
- b) A further speed survey be carried out and that the speed limit be reviewed on receipt of the survey.
- c) The width and condition of the footway be explored.

**c) To consider updates on petitions previously considered:**

There were none to consider.

## 203. LOCAL SERVICES UPDATE

Members received the following updates and explanation of the impact of Covid-19 on front line services from the Area Managers from Neighbourhood Services and Technical Services:

### **Neighbourhood Services:**

- Severe bad weather w/c 8 February had resulted in widespread disruption to refuse collections, street cleansing and grounds maintenance. He apologised for the delays as many properties had to wait until the next fortnightly recycling collection. He was pleased to report that there had been no injuries, damage to vehicles or property.
- NEAT operatives, working their shorter winter hours (28 hours per week) had been required to assist with town centre gritting.
- Final preparation was taking place for grass cutting which was due to start in the next couple of weeks, dependent on ground conditions.
- Weed control activities were due to start in May without use of blue dye. A trial of glyphosate alternatives was to be undertaken during the year.
- A programme of work was being developed for clearance of litter on rural A roads which required traffic management.
- Enhanced cleaning of public conveniences and additional emptying of litter bins was being programmed with increased footfall expected to continue with staycations due to the pandemic.
- Use of road sweepers had ceased during the adverse winter weather as they were not effective when the ground was frozen, however, the routes had recommenced.
- Tony Mousley had been appointed to the post of Waste Senior Team Leader.
- Extra collections of the 1100 litre bins at the glass recycling sites continued to be required.
- Garden waste collections had commenced with the yearly charge remaining at £43.00. Routes had been revised to accommodate an increased in demand for the service.
- Presentation rates and yields remained encouraging during the glass collection trial. A report summarising the effectiveness of the scheme was to be considered in July.

Issues raised by Councillors included:

- Additional weekend collections were required of waste bins at Tyne Green. Bins at this location were to be included in the extra collections during the spring and summer. Officers were also looking at the possibility of removing the flaps on waste bins with lids, as the bins were often not full, but dog waste bags had been left on the ground. It was believed individuals were reluctant to touch the handles to lift the lids during the pandemic.
- The bad weather refuse collection updates had been extremely helpful and shared with residents.

- Review of public toilet facilities. It was understood that capital funding was proposed to upgrade and refurbish some public toilet facilities. Cleansing had been increased to 3 visits per day.
- The recruitment process was underway to fill the vacant Trees and Woodland Officer post. Members commented on the helpfulness of the previous post holder. Queries could be sent to the Trees and Woodland Team Leader.

### **Technical Services:**

- The first 2 weeks in February had been particularly challenging for staff due the prolonged period of freezing temperatures, ice, snow and 10-foot drifts in some areas of Tynedale.
- During this 2-week period, there had been 31 planned applications / treatments on the network, as well as revisits and additional routes. This amounted to 4,160 hours of gritting on the network and application of 11,872 tonnes of salt. All major routes had remained open with the exception of a section of the A68 for a few hours on 14 February.
- Unfortunately, the prolonged period of freezing temperatures and subsequent thaw had led to a deterioration of the surface of the road network which was, worse than anticipated. Extra highways inspections and resource has been brought into the area to undertake repairs as fast as possible with staff working additional hours to reduce the backlog of repairs.
- Hedge to hedge works continued with clearing of ditches and widening of roads; 100 signs were to be replaced around the Sandhoe and Sill areas.
- The LTP Programme was behind schedule due to the period of bad weather, but staff were working weekends to catch up and complete the programme before the end of the financial year. 47 of 51 schemes had been completed to date.
- 186,432 m<sup>2</sup> of permanent road surfacing had been completed in the locality.
- Areas had been identified for surface dressing with work due to commence in May / June. 500,000 m<sup>2</sup> was due to be completed across the road network in 2021/22.
- Notification of dates for members' schemes work would be issued in next few weeks.

The Local Services Area Managers expressed their appreciation to staff and contractors for the long hours worked in the recent period of adverse weather.

### ***Councillor Quinn left the meeting.***

Issues raised by Councillors included:

- Concerns regarding the surface of roads on the network and longevity of repairs. Temporary repairs had been made quickly in some areas to make the road safe, although it was likely that 2 jobs were recorded in the Mayrise system, with a separate order for a permanent repair at a later

date. Additional equipment had been hired due to the volume of work outstanding on A and B class roads.

- Grit bins would continue to be replenished in the next few weeks.
- The importance of drainage works. The gulley wagon timetable had been halted whilst drivers had been required for winter services work. The programme had resumed and an additional vehicle hired to assist with the work for the next couple of months. Letter drops were used to remove vehicles from areas, when required.
- Temporary repairs were required on Alndale Road.
- Volume of water on road surface next to Bristol Street Motors remained a concern. Work had been undertaken to replace the gulley and the volume of detritus was suspected as a contributing factor. The issue would be reviewed with a view to increasing the frequency of drain clearance.
- Traffic management plans be shared with Councillors, in advance of work, where possible. It was noted that many rural roads had not been constructed for the size of vehicles now in use.

Many of the members expressed their gratitude to the staff and contractors for the work that had been undertaken in difficult conditions and for the prompt response to requests.

Updates on issues raised during the meeting would be obtained for Councillors Stewart, Gibson, Sharp, Riddle and Cessford.

**RESOLVED** that the updates be noted.

## **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### **204. MEMBERS LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES - PROGRESS REPORT**

The Local Area Council received a progress update on Members' Local Improvement Schemes as at 1 February 2021. (A copy of the report is enclosed with the minutes as Appendix D.)

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

### **205. LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME**

A list of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings was circulated. (A copy is enclosed with the minutes as Appendix E.)

Members were invited to email any requests to the Chair and / or Democratic Services Officer between meetings.

**RESOLVED** that the work programme be noted.

### **206. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 13 April 2021 at 2.00 p.m.

**CHAIR** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_