

## **NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **CRAMLINGTON, BEDLINGTON AND SEATON VALLEY LOCAL AREA COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the **Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council** held in Netherton Social Club, 1a Netherton Lane, Bedlington, NE22 6DP on Wednesday, 19 September 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

#### **PRESENT**

Councillor M Robinson  
(Vice Chair, in the Chair for items 26 - 27 and 32 - 39)

Councillor B Pidcock  
(Planning Vice-chair, in the Chair for items 28 - 31)

#### **MEMBERS**

W Crosby  
W Daley

M D Swinburn (part)  
R Wallace

#### **OFFICERS**

M Carle  
U Filby  
G Horsman  
D Lally  
T Gribbins

R Laughton  
J Murphy  
K Norris

Highways Delivery Area Manager  
Solicitor  
Senior Planning Officer  
Chief Executive  
Neighbourhood Services Area  
Manager  
Planning Officer  
Principal Planning Officer  
Democratic Services Officer

#### **ALSO PRESENT**

Neighbourhood Inspectors Trevor Oakley and Kevin Waring - Northumbria Police  
Public: 5  
Press: 0

#### **26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dunbar, Dungworth, Flux, Hepple and Richards.

## 27. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council held on Wednesday, 18 July, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

## 28. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Daley declared an interest in application 18/02196/CCD as he was Cabinet Member for Children's Services and had promoted the application. He said he would withdraw from the meeting while it was being determined.

## 29. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The report requested members 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. The procedure at planning committees was appended for information.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

## 30. 17/02012/OUT - Outline Planning Permission with all matters reserved for the erection of two dwellings, Land West of 62 Station Road, Station Road, Stannington, NE61 6NN

Geoff Horsman, Senior Planning Officer, introduced the above application which was being considered by the Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council as the site was just within the boundary of the West Bedlington ward in the former Wansbeck District area. Mr Horsman summarised the application with the aid of a slide presentation. Public Protection and the County Ecologist had advised they did not have sufficient information to comment on the proposal.

Councillor Swinburn entered the meeting at 5:10 pm during consideration of the application and did not participate in any of the debate or voting thereon.

Suzan Dixon addressed the committee to speak in support of the application and her comments included the following points:

- She was in attendance with her sister Carol and they had jointly inherited the existing property and land upon the death of their mother in 2007.
- She provided background information about the history of the site and the existing property which had been their family home since 1954.
- Carol still lived in the property and intended to stay.
- They had begun the planning process 3 years ago. The site was on previously developed land (PDL); an initial ecology survey and contamination survey had

been undertaken; a massing study had been submitted which demonstrated visual impact in detail; the planning officer had confirmed it was a sustainable location.

- Various sites had been developed along the road including 8 bungalows at The Furrows and 6 bungalows to the south.
- Stannington Parish Council had supported the application stating that the site was previously commercial and was now derelict land.
- Planning permission had been granted for 34 houses 250 metres from the site. The Council had not felt that would impact on the Green Belt. This application was only for 2 houses which would be surrounded by trees and they could not accept it would have any impact on the Green Belt.
- They were not developers, Carol lived next to the site and did not wish to live next to a housing estate. Any dwellings would be self build opportunities and would be registered on the Council's local self build register.
- The application was recommended for refusal despite being on PDL and being in a sustainable location.
- They were more than happy to comply and do further surveys if members could give them some assurance of approval which, to date, officers had not.
- They invited members to undertake a site visit to see for themselves what the impact would be.

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

- It was not known for definite what the visibility of the development would be.
- The applicant was willing to limit the height of the buildings to that of the existing two houses to the east of the application site but the footprint was unknown.
- The dwellings would not be seen from the A192 to the east but it was the Senior Planning Officer's opinion that there would be views from the west if the properties were of a similar height to the two existing dwellings.
- Stannington Station was surrounded by open countryside, woodland and agricultural land. In terms of views, looking south east from Station Road there was currently no view of built development.
- Officers had looked very carefully at the application and were of the view that the proposed development of this site would have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.
- The Senior Planning Officer did not know the full history of the site or why the previous buildings had fallen out of use but said the application could only be assessed against what was currently there.
- The application was being considered in line with current policies.
- There was a definition of PDL within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Where previous development activity had blended into the landscape, a site was no longer classed as PDL but this site was not at that stage quite yet as there were still remains of one of the buildings.
- A judgement had to be made and it was considered that the proposal would have a greater impact on the Green Belt than what was currently on the site.
- This application was being considered on its own merits, members had to consider how the development would sit in the surrounding built context. Permissions had been granted at the other end of Station Road but this application was on the eastern edge of the settlement and did not have the same extent of built context.

- At this stage proposals were only a guide, it was not known how much of the site would be infilled.
- Sport and play provision had been included in paragraph 7.41 of the report because of a policy in the former Wansbeck District Development Plan. Officers were no longer able to agree general sport/play contributions for Section 106 Agreements but could seek contributions for specific sport/play projects in the local area which those residing in the development could benefit from. Further discussions with the applicant would be required if things proceeded to that point.
- It was confirmed that the core of the planning argument was the detrimental impact on the Green Belt and the harmful urbanising impact on the open countryside.
- It was a matter of judgement, it was about satisfying a test having regard to what was currently on the site, the views of neighbouring properties and the overall impact on the Green Belt.
- As a Local Authority, Northumberland County Council was trying to encourage self build plots within the County but that was not sufficient weight to override harm on the Green Belt, although it was a material consideration it would not justify departure from Green Belt policy.
- Although the Northumberland Strategic Market Housing Assessment was very detailed, the test for that would be no different than the tests carried out so far.
- The reference to sustainability within the report was in relation to the accessibility of the site. When looking at sustainability the NPPF referred to three areas - economic, social and environmental so yes aspirations of the developer were taken into account but ultimately an overall judgement was needed and substantial weight must be given to the Green Belt.
- Government policy was very clear in the NPPF that developments should only be permitted in the Green Belt if it was appropriate or, if inappropriate, there would need to be very special circumstances.

Councillor Wallace proposed a site visit in order that members could assess the impact of the development on the Green Belt and the openness of the site for themselves which was seconded by Councillor Daley.

Upon being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed and it was therefore:

**RESOLVED** that a site visit be undertaken, details of which to be circulated.

**31. 18/02196/CCD - Provision of 2 no. modular classrooms (single storey) including covered walkways (part retrospective), Whytrig Community Middle School, Elsdon Avenue, Seaton Delaval, Whitley Bay, Northumberland, NE25 0BP**

**(Councillor Daley had declared an interest in this application and withdrew from the meeting while it was being determined.)**

Richard Laughton, Planning Officer, summarised the above application with the aid of a slide presentation.

In response to a question it was noted that the application was part retrospective due to the need for building work to be carried out during the school holidays.

Councillor Wallace moved approval in line with officer recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Robinson.

Upon being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed and it was therefore:

**RESOLVED** that the application be granted (part retrospective) subject to the conditions, with reasons, set out in the report.

### **32. PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE**

Members received information on the progress of planning appeals.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

*(The meeting then adjourned at 5.55 pm and Councillor Pidcock vacated the Chair. The meeting restarted at 6.05 pm, with Councillor Robinson in the Chair.)*

### **33. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

**Paul Hedley, Hartford Residents' Association**

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Mr Hedley questioned if the Council had informed emergency services about road closures as there had been two incidents during the recent closure of the A192 near Hartford Hall, one being when an ambulance had to turn around. In response the Highways Delivery Area Manager confirmed that the emergency services were always informed about road closures and that full instructions had been provided. He could not comment on the incidents referred to as he did not know the full circumstances.

**Keith Dalton, Bedlington**

Mr Dalton referred to questions he had raised at July's meeting regarding the toilets in Gallagher Park and parking charges at Plessey Woods. He said he had not received a written response as stated in the minutes and said it was the second time there had been no follow up to questions he had raised. He asked if communication with the public would be improved. In response the Chief Executive said she had been informed that a written response had been provided about the toilets in Gallagher Park to Mr Dalton on 10 September and that he had also been informed about parking charges having been introduced in Plessey Woods on 16 July. She apologised if Mr Dalton had not received those replies.

Mr Dalton then referred to Meadowdale bus stop stating that the post had been vandalised and taken down 6 months ago and queried if it would be replaced. The Vice Chair said the bus stop was in his ward and he had forwarded Mr Dalton's query to the appropriate department who had looked into it and assured him that posts that were going to be replaced had been replaced. The Chief Executive provided Mr Dalton with her email address and said she would ensure that he received a reply to future queries.

### **34. PETITIONS**

- (a) No new petitions had been received.
- (b) There were no reports to consider.
- (c) There were no update on previous petitions.

### **35. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES**

Tony Gribbin, Neighbourhood Services Area Manager and Michael Carle, Highways Delivery Area Manager, were in attendance to provide a verbal update about any key recent, ongoing and/or future planned Local Services work.

The Neighbourhood Services Area Manager provided an update as follows:

- There had been a significant investment in waste and recycling teams. Fifty two new vehicles had been purchased to replace the existing fleet and also help improve and absorb the increase in housing across the county. The new vehicles had begun to arrive and would be received over the next 2 years
- There had been a review of where refuse teams were working across the county and, as a result, there would be a number of day changes in order to make services more efficient. In South East Northumberland the changes would take place in November. All Parish/Town Councils would be advised, there would be letter drops to residents and posts on social media to publicise the changes.
- Grass cutting had commenced again after the cool down in the weather and would continue to be monitored.
- With regard to weed control, spraying was dependant on the weather and was currently taking place.

A member emphasised the importance of highlighting that there would be no reduction in service due to the change of day for refuse collection.

In response to a question it was confirmed that blue dye would still be used and Parish/Town Councils would be informed to help to alleviate any concerns the public may have.

The Highways Delivery Area Manager then gave an update on the following issues:

- Tarmac patching - details of completed works since 9 July 2018 were provided and it was noted that there were upcoming works scheduled for Old Stone Road, East Cramlington, Main Street, Seghill and Nelson Village, Cramlington.
- Signage (cycleways) around Cramlington.
- Arcot Lane - details of road closure in 2 to 3 weeks including easement consent, highways consent and drainage.
- Drainage works and LTP schemes would continue across the county.

In response to concerns about issues at Bedlington bank to Blyth and problems with buses and tractors, the Highways Delivery Area Manager stated that the design section would need to look at slippage in that area.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

With the consent of the Chair, following item was brought forward on the agenda:

### **36. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PLACE**

#### **The Green Dog Walker Scheme and Dog Fouling Enforcement**

The purpose of the report (enclosed with the official minutes at Appendix B) was to update members on the progress of the Green Dog Walker Scheme and also on dog control enforcement in 2017/18. The report was considered by the Communities and Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 25 July 2018 and was attached for the Local Area Council's information.

The Neighbourhood Services Area Manager gave a brief update stating that the scheme had been very successful with 1,488 people having signed up to it. He said this was very encouraging and the scheme had already yielded measurable benefits with a 26% reduction in the number of dog fouling complaints having been received by the Council since it started. Events had taken place which had been organised in partnership with local Town and Parish Councils and the Enforcement Team were keen to carry out more events next year.

The Chair welcomed the report and was encouraged by the results seen.

A member suggested there should be a new bye law to exclude dogs from playing fields and pitches. The Neighbourhood Services Area Manager noted the comments and said he would forward them to the Public Protection Manager.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted and comments forwarded to the Public Protection Manager.

### **37. ANNUAL POLICING UPDATE**

Neighbourhood Inspectors Trevor Oakley and Kevin Waring were in attendance to provide an update on policing in the Cramlington, Blyth and Seaton Valley areas.

Inspector Waring said he had worked in Ashington for the last 5 months but his area included Bedlington, Blyth and Cambois. The role of the Neighbourhood Services Team was to tackle crime and disorder and, in conjunction with outside agencies, make communities safer and better places in which to live. They looked to target offenders and protect vulnerable people. He was keen to know from members about issues that had been raised with them.

Members raised the following issues:

- It had been a summer of full of antisocial behaviour in Bedlington and there had been damage to cars for which three or four youths seemed to be responsible. In response Inspector Waring said, although there had been a reduction in antisocial behaviour in Ashington and Blyth, it had risen in Bedlington with perpetrators coming in to Bedlington from Ashington and Blyth. There had also been a number of events in Bedlington, for example Bed Rock, which had led to antisocial behaviour and drinking in the streets. He referred to 'Operation Virtue' which was a problem solving plan involving schools and neighbourhood officers who had been dedicated to specific families. He ensured members that anti-social behaviour was a top priority for the Police.
- There needed to be a visible Police presence on the street. People were being encouraged to report anti-social behaviour, even the next day, so that the Police knew where to better deploy resources.
- Parking outside of schools was still an issue, particularly between the hours of 8:30 am to 9:00 am and 3:30 pm to 4:00 pm. Inspector Oakley replied that it was a difficult situation especially with the amount of new housing being built, however, schools could do a lot to help and community support officers could get involved. A member pointed out that every school had a school travel plan which should be refreshed to take into account new housing. There were initiatives such as 'walk to school wednesdays' and young people should be encouraged to get to school themselves where it was safe to do so.
- Double yellow lines had been painted on the side of the dual carriageway beside Cramlington High School but residents had reported that vehicles were still being parked there. Some parents did not realise how dangerous that could be. It was noted that this was not an urban clearway which might be a better option than double yellow lines. Another option was to have the enforcement vehicle visit the area and issue parking tickets.
- With regard to speeding, the Local Member for Seaton Delaval said there had been a reduction in speed due to the road signs which flashed with a smiley face when the speed limit was complied with. Discussion ensued about whether the purchase of these signs was permissible.
- It was queried if the Neighbourhood Policing Team mailbox in Bedlington was checked on a regular basis as often no response was received to incidents reported. Inspector Waring said he would take that back as an action to follow up.
- With regard to cyber crime, exact statistics were not available and a lot of it was unreported. There was a special unit which dealt with it and figures could be sought. The Police tried to give as much advice as possible to vulnerable people who could be targeted but on line exploitation was a problem.
- Although the LMAPS meetings no longer took place, the Police still held regular meetings with Council officers from Homes for Northumberland and Public Protection.
- With regard to shoplifting, each case was assessed on its own merits. If someone was at risk, or there was a prolific offender, the call would be prioritised. On some occasions officers would ask the store for cctv footage

along with a statement and the case would be investigated remotely. This was so that crimes needing a more urgent response could be given priority.

- Improvements had been made to control rooms and more people had been employed to cover peak periods.

The Chair thanked Inspector Oakley and Inspector Waring for attending the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted and queries raised followed up.

### **38. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LOCAL SERVICES AND HOUSING DELIVERY**

#### **Members' Local Improvement Schemes - Progress Report**

Members received a progress report on Local Improvement Schemes (copy enclosed with the official minutes as Appendix C).

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

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

Members noted the latest version of agreed items for future Local Area Council meetings (any suggestions for new agenda items would require confirmation by the Business Chair after the meeting). (A copy of the Work Programme is enclosed with the official minutes as Appendix D.)

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

### **40. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 17 October - venue and time to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 7:00 pm.

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

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