

## **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, 21 November 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

#### **PRESENT**

Councillor C Dunbar  
(Chair, in the Chair for items 47 - 48 and 52 - 60 )

Councillor B Pidcock  
(Planning Vice-Chair, in the Chair for items 49 and 50)

#### **MEMBERS**

W Crosby  
S E Dungworth (part)  
A Hepple (part)  
M Richards

M Robinson  
M D Swinburn  
I C F Swithenbank  
R J Wallace

#### **OFFICERS**

H Bowers  
M Carle  
M Bulman  
G Fairs  
T Gribbin  
  
J Murphy  
L Sinnamon  
R Soulsby

Democratic Services Officer  
Highways Delivery Area Manager  
Solicitor  
Highways Development Manager  
Neighbourhood Services Area  
Manager  
Principal Planning Officer  
Interim Head of Planning Services  
Planning Officer

Public: 14  
Press: 0

#### **47. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Daley and Flux.

#### 48. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council held on Wednesday, 17 October, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

#### 49. 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. (Report attached as **Appendix A**).

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

*Councillor Robinson left the meeting before the following application was discussed and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.*

#### 50. **17/04451/OUT - Outline permission with some matters reserved for the development of 11 no. detached 2 storey dwellings with associated access work and removal of trees (as amended 03/05/18), land North West of Blue House Farm, Netherton Colliery, Northumberland. (Report attached as Appendix B)**

Ryan Soulsby, Planning Officer, introduced the above application by firstly providing an update:

Further information had been submitted by the agent of the application in regards to the highways issues. This information had been assessed by the Highways Team who wished for their refusal reason to be retained upon the application. They had however, advised that amendments to the layout on land within the applicant's control, could enable that refusal reason to be withdrawn.

Comments had also been submitted by a member of the public following the publication of the report online in which they felt that the proposal would not result in any substantial harm to the adjacent Grade II listed property. Correspondence had taken place with the Officer and Building Conservation following the submission of the comments in which Building Conservation retained their stance in objecting to the proposal, in which they recognised significant harm to the listed building and its setting.

*Councillor Dungworth joined the meeting at 6.05 pm.*

Some discussion took place whether Councillor Dungworth could take part in the determination of the application, and with advice from the Solicitor, it was advised

that Councillor Dungworth would not be able to vote as the Planning Officer had already commenced his presentation.

The Planning Officer continued presenting the report and presentation on screen.

Steven Waters addressed the committee to speak in objection of the application and his comments included the following points:

- He was a neighbour of the applicant
- The property at plot 8 would overlook directly into his conservatory and garden. They currently had views of the open countryside
- Access for emergency vehicles, there was one road in and one road out
- Construction traffic on the site would block access

Mr Robin Wood, agent for the applicant addressed the committee and spoke in support of the application and his comments included the following points:

- He referred to refusal reason 1 and brought Members attention to the Council's April 2017 pre application response which stated "*The site was considered to be in a sustainable location close to Bedlington Town, within walking distance of transport links, local services and amenities.* It stated that the Council could identify a 5 year supply across the county with a 5.4 year supply within the south east delivery area. It concluded that the principle of development was acceptable to site specific issues being addressed. Despite that, paragraph 7.7 of the report now claimed that it was not a sustainable location. Paragraph 7.6 claimed the policy section raised objection at the pre application stage and paragraph 2.4 stated the pre application was supportive only because there was no 5 year housing supply. He claimed the report was not accurate
- After submission of the application, further work on archaeology, highways and coal risk was requested. Before doing that, it had been checked that Officers still supported the application as the applicant was about to spend another £15,000. The Planning Officer replied by email having checked with a Senior Officer and stated that he had been advised that the application could be supported on the site despite policies objection, due to the sustainable location on the outskirts of Bedlington and the fact that a much larger scheme was permitted outside the settlement boundary in 2015
- On 3 May this year, an email was received from the Planning Officer removing support which stated that there had been a considerable change within the service with the overall administration focusing upon defined settlement boundaries as part of the planning process for new houses and as a 5 housing supply could be demonstrated development in open countryside was now to be strongly restricted
- He referred to a meeting between the The Head of Planning and Planning Officer about the application
- Nothing in the policy had changed in Bedlington since the pre application. Just two weeks ago, the Strategic Planning Committee had granted permission for 500 houses outside Bedlington's boundary. In that case,

settlement boundary policy stated was not consistent with the NPPF and a 5 year housing supply was not an issue because of minded to approve decisions from mid 2017. Since mid 2017 the supply position had completely changed and minded decisions were not binding. If we were being consistent in theory, there was now no need for 500 houses beyond the settlement boundary and the application should have been refused

- There were only 2 conclusions to reach - the first and correct one was that the principle of development was still acceptable for the reasons set out in the pre application
- If Members did maintain refusal reason 1, it must be concluded that the pre application response was incomplete, spurious and misleading and the Council would be liable for the applicant's £30,000 plus expenditure
- On refusal 2, the scheme would not impact on the settling of the listed building. It was listed because of its frontage and combined views of the site and frontage were not possible, because of the house and a 30ft hedge. Also the Building Conservation comments were 5 months late
- He queried how the parking standards were arrived at
- The applicant had done nothing wrong although the pre application was not a guarantee of permission. However, Officer opinion on the principle, once stated and repeated had to carry weight and should be respected and maintained where there had not been any policy change
- He requested Members grant permission for the scheme or defer the matter for a site visit

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

- The site was situated outside the public right of way
- The members of the Committee were the decision makers and for them to ask any questions of Officers who would give their opinion
- Planning Officers considered that this was not a sustainable location because of poor footpath links
- The definition of sustainable was outlined in paragraph 8 of the NPPF which achieved 3 objectives - ecology, social and the environment
- A separation distance of 15 metres would exist between plot 8 and the objector's property, which was considered acceptable
- The only building which was listed was Blue House Farm
- Although the Local Plan was aged, it was not out of date and as the site sat outside of the settlement boundary, the application was contrary to policy
- Over the years, applications outside the settlement boundary would be contrary to the development plan but other factors had to be taken into consideration, eg, accessing the need for housing which was weighed in support. It was now known that the Council has a 5 year housing land supply in which case a need for more housing could not be a factor to be weighed in the balance. Access work had been carried out to make the site more acceptable but the application was still unacceptable
- One of the problems was that although the application was outline, the layout was being considered at this stage and although the revised plans

had been submitted, there were some minor issues which needed to be amended and dealt with now, eg, the junction, manoeuvring and parking spaces

- Paragraph 7.8 referred to the presumption for sustainable development and advised that Northumberland could demonstrate that it has more than a 5 year housing land supply and as such the tilted balance in the presumption in favour of sustainable development was not engaged on the basis of housing land supply matters
- Members had to make a decision on what was before them
- Since the pre application in 2017, an Interim Statement had been produced following the withdrawal of the Core Strategy
- The Head of Planning explained that Officers had a duty to have up to date housing figures and the NPPF gave Officers that responsibility. This was also part of the Interim Statement
- When the pre application was issued, although there was a 5 year land supply the emerging Core Strategy had an ambitious housing growth numbers. Since the pre application, the Core Strategy had been withdrawn which had caused officers to look at the application differently.

Councillor Dunbar moved that the application should be refused for the reasons set out in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Richards.

Upon being put to the vote members agreed the motion FOR 8; AGAINST 0; ABSTENTIONS 0 and it was therefore:

**RESOLVED** that members **REFUSE** permission subject to the conditions and reasons set out in the report.

*Councillor Robinson returned to the meeting.*

## **51. PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE**

Members received information on the progress of planning appeals. (**Appendix C**).

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

## **52. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No public questions were asked.

## **53. PETITIONS**

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

## 54. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

Members received the following updates from the Area Managers from Neighbourhood Services and Technical Services:

### Neighbourhood Services:

All grass maintenance had been completed.

There had been changes to bin collection day and although there had been a few teething problems the change over had gone well. Any issues should be reported in order that they could be addressed.

### Technical Services:

#### Management/Supervisors/Drivers

All the rotas and drivers were in position and training and investment was being continued with a number of additional employees including apprentices with HGV and Winter Service training.

#### Fleet

There was a fleet of front line gritters on station with five new Econ/Mercedes 18 and 26 tonne gritters.

#### Salt

All of the summer order of rock salt had been delivered and at the start of the season there was approximately 37,500 tonnes with all depots being at capacity. As part of that there was a strategic/resilience store of 4,000 tonnes.

#### Weather Monitoring

All procedures were in place with weather monitoring. Three experienced, specialised winter service managers were in place to cover the winter period who would monitor all forecast weather and weather stations 24/7 from October to April.

#### Additional Support

Farmers and sub contract support had all been checked and was in place in case of any serious snow over the coming months.

#### Cross Boundary Working

Arrangements were in place for cross boundary working with all adjoining authorities to ensure continuity between operational boundaries with the Authority salting the entire length of the A69 from Newcastle to the M6 in Cumbria. The Authority also completed the weather forecasting and decision making for Newcastle City Council's winter services operation.

#### Winter Storms/Flooding

Despite performing very well during the bad weather earlier in the year, lessons had been learned.

Where applicable and when the weather dictated, staff on rota would also respond to flooding and other storm related issues supporting the existing Out of Hours rota.

The Authority currently received severe weather warnings well in advance of event from several sources including the Met Office.

#### New Salt Barns

The Authority had recently been awarded a contract to construct two new salt barns at Allendale and Blyth. Salt covers were also being implemented at the strategic store at Powburn.

#### Salt Bins and Heaps

Area teams were replenishing all salt bins and heaps. Further replenishments would be completed upon request throughout the winter period.

#### Alerts/Social Media

Gritting actions were posted on the NCC website, twitter and facebook across the winter period.

People were advised to use the 0345 600 6400 number for winter service requests or any emergencies which would be logged and dealt with correctly.

A Member expressed his thanks for all the work that had been carried out and the Officers were thanked for their updates.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

### **DISCUSSION ITEM - CORPORATE**

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

##### **Northumberland Economic Strategy**

Rob Strettle, Principal Policy Officer, was in attendance to talk about the Economic Strategy for Northumberland which was part of the County Council's strategic policy framework which was last published in 2015 for a 5 year period. It set out a strategic economic framework regarding the county's economic needs and priorities supporting case making and bids for funding. The Strategy guided the work of the Council, its development company and other partners in delivering economic growth.

The Economic Trends for Northumberland and Policy and funding opportunities were outlined in the presentation.

There had been many changes over the last few years and the current Economic Strategy was currently being refreshed as the new North of Tyne Combined Authority developed, the North East Strategic Economic Plan was being revised and new opportunities, such as the Borderlands Growth Deal, were sought. The refresh also took into account macro economic policy changes such as the new national Industrial Strategy and the potential impact of Brexit.

Members had been briefed in the summer about the refresh which focused on delivery and the Council was currently engaging in stakeholder events with business forums and sector networks. Mr Strettle provided a presentation to guide members through the new Strategy and explained how it would take the county forward in terms of delivery. (A copy of the presentation is filed with the official minutes of the meeting and uploaded to the Council's website.)

Key areas covered were:

- The Refresh Process;
- Economic Trends for Northumberland;
- Policy and Funding Opportunities;
- Economic Assets - what could be done to deliver growth;
- Focus of the new strategy - inclusive, industrial growth across Northumberland;
- Strategy Priorities;
- Delivery and Next Steps.

During the presentation the Principal Policy Officer emphasised the opportunities to support growth including the new North of Tyne Combined Authority which brought up to £600 million through its investment fund which would help with delivery alongside the development of the Borderlands Deal focusing on the rural parts of the county where there was a unique deal being prepared with both the Scottish and UK Government.

It was also important to note the share prosperity fund would replace EU funding which was very important in terms of supporting communities and businesses. It was important to think about parts of Northumberland's business base that might be affected by Brexit, examples included the tourism and culture sector and any impact on the manufacturing base, particularly in maintaining close contact with

foreign direct owned companies. In terms of land based industry the transition from CAP funding from Europe to UK arrangements would be important.

In terms of opportunities, Northumberland had a series of industrial and unique assets including the agricultural farm owned by Newcastle University at Cockle Park and the subsea innovation through the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult at the Port of Blyth. The advanced manufacturing activity through Akzo Nobel at Ashwood Business Park in Ashington was a good example of the world class facilities in the county.

In work done so far, six priorities had been listed (as detailed in the presentation). The new Strategy would be launched next year with a delivery plan to follow. Key opportunities in 2019 included the new North of Tyne Combined Authority, the proposed Borderlands Growth Deal and the Future High Streets Fund. The Council was supporting business case development and working with partners.

Next steps - the new Strategy would commence in early 2019. Members were also advised that the Council produced an external funding bulletin and should anyone wish to receive this they should contact Tracy Jennings. A link to the Council's External Funding Bulletin was included with the presentation and details had also been passed to Democratic Services for inclusion on the Council's website, Facebook page etc.

#### **Comments and questions from Members:**

- What would happen when the UK left the EU?
- Problems with accessing public transport to reach places of employment, eg Cobalt Business Park
- Bedlington, Cramlington and Blyth had been included but there had been no mention of Seaton Valley
- There was no representative from the Authority for the North of Tyne Joint Transport Committee
- The need for employment demand to inform skills provision
- Employment for people with disabilities
- How was need identified?

In response, Mr Strettle advised that partners, including Local Authorities had been working together through the North East Brexit Group to ensure that the region pushed for the best possible arrangements post brexit including equivalent funding allocations. The consultation process for the Shared Prosperity Fund was vital for this part of the county and NCC staff were involved in this.

In relation to connectivity, in addition to local bus service connections the Northumberland/Newcastle rail line was emphasised as a key intervention that would allow additional people to commute between Newcastle, North Tyneside and South East Northumberland employment locations including in this Local Area Council area.

Members were advised that Advance Northumberland had convened a manufacturing skills network bringing demand and supply together, eg, STEM training facilities and inclusive employment measures would help to support young people's aspirations and increase the pathways available to people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) to access industry opportunities.

The Economic Strategy helped to identify the policy issues the council wished to address and this included a focus on providing training and skills, working with the FE and University sector, particularly across the North of Tyne. For instance work was on going with the National Institute of Ageing in Newcastle looking at how the area could address the challenge of an ageing population but also focused on the positive opportunities for industry and skills to develop new products and innovation and to train the workforce to take advantage of the opportunity ultimately to help older people live good lives.

The Chair thanked Mr Strettle for his presentation and it was **RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

## **56. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

### **Empowering Communities Project**

Liz Morgan, Director of Public Health to provide a presentation about the Empowering Communities Project (copy of report and presentation enclosed with the official minutes as **Appendix D**).

Key details of the presentation included:

- The need for a cultural shift in improving health and wellbeing; moving away from single issue, individual lifestyle change; focusing on what made people well and wellbeing; building on the positives; working more with communities.
- Drivers for change (National and Local).
- Community centred approaches: strengthening communities; volunteer and peer roles; collaborations and partnerships; access to community resources.
- Social prescribing
- The benefits and risks.
- An overview of the Empowering Communities project (2 ½ years): Five Locality Co-ordinators funded from the Public Health grant and employed by Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, one for each Local Council area, to be embedded within the voluntary and community sector/not for profit host organisations;
- Objectives of the Empowering Communities Project - the initial role of coordinators, including
  - their role in the first six months
  - their role from six months onwards
  - the role of host organisations

#### Locality Coordinator recruitment

- The request to the Local Area Councils to help Locality Co-ordinators to identify local communities' assets;
- Working with the Locality Co-ordinator and communities to identify needs, build on aspirations and link assets to strengthen individuals and local communities.

Cllr Veronica Jones (portfolio holder for Adult Wellbeing and Health) Maggie Martin (Locality Coordinator Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley), Debra Dodds (Operations Manager, Self Directed Support, Prevention and Carers) and Julia Marley (Team Manager) were also in attendance.

Following the presentation, Members raised the following comments and queries:

- A Member agreed with the report and was pleased to see emphasis being shifted towards well being. However, the approach needed to be funded properly and a case should be made to ensure that the VCS continued to be supported. This report tied in with the report from the Northern Powerhouse on the link between health and wealth.
- The poorer health in the North of England
- Discrepancies between richer and poorer areas and funding
- Mental health and well being started at a young age. How did that link in with schools and parents?
- Communities were very insular with people being isolated

The Director of Public Health explained that the project was about working with communities which encompassed children and young people. Inter-generational work was something that would be encouraged and supported. A 'one size fits all' approach would not work as communities even within small geographical areas could be very different. Evaluating the outcomes of these approaches was challenging but there was increasing evidence that this sort of community based support had a meaningful impact on health and wellbeing and demand on primary care. Supporting the VCS was critical as without a thriving VCS, there would be no community based support in which to link people into.

The Chair thanked Ms Morgan for her presentation

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

#### **DISCUSSION ITEM - LOCAL**

#### **57. COMMUNITY CLOTHING SCHEME**

Members received information about the community clothing scheme in Northumberland (leaflet attached to the official minutes as **Appendix E**).

Freema Chambers, Founder of the Community Clothing Scheme was in attendance and gave an overview of the service.

The scheme was created and originally based in Cramlington to help out families in the North East but had recently moved to a bigger unit in the Cobalt Business Park.

Every week hundreds of items of schoolwear was given to families which was huge lifeline. In addition the scheme provided free hire interview wear and special occasion wear for a small fee to cover the cost of repair and cleaning. Just recently a nursery lend department had been opened which also provided a free hire service for nursery and baby equipment.

The Community Clothing Scheme worked with Social Services and other charities to help with domestic abuse situations.

The service was not just for people on benefits but for people suffering from poverty issues.

Donations to the scheme could be made to any Northeast Co-op Funeral Care store and details could be found on the scheme's Facebook page.

Ms Chambers was thanked for the hard work and help carried out and was applauded by Members.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

## **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### **58. MEMBERS' LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES - PROGRESS REPORT**

Members received information about the community clothing scheme in Northumberland (leaflet attached to the official minutes as **Appendix E**).

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Donations to the scheme could be made to any Northeast Co-op Funeral Care store and details could be found on the scheme's Facebook page.

Ms Chambers was thanked for the hard work and help carried out and this was applauded by Members.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

## **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### **59. MEMBERS' LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES 2018/19**

Members were provided with an update on Members' Local Improvement Schemes during 2018/19 at at 1 November 2018. (Report attached as **Appendix F**).

### **60. 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 G**.)

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

### **61. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday, 19 December - venue and time to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 7.31 pm.

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

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

Ch.'s Initials.....

*Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council - 21 November 2018*