

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **North Northumberland Local Area Council** held at St. James's Church Centre (upstairs hall), Pottergate, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 1JW on Thursday, 24 January 2019 at 3.00pm

PRESENT

Councillor G. Castle
(Chair, in the Chair, items 141 - 143, and 150 - 158)

Councillor T. Thorne
(Planning Vice-chair, in the Chair, items 144 - 149)

MEMBERS

T. Clark
G. Hill
R. Moore
A. Murray

W. Pattison
G. Renner-Thompson
G. Roughead
C. Seymour

ALSO PRESENT

P. Jackson

N. Oliver

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

M. Bird
G. Bucknall
B. Hodgson

L. Hindhaugh
S. Holmes

T. Kirsop
D. Lally
T. Lowe
N. Masson
C. McDonagh
J. Sharp
E. Sinnamon

Senior Democratic Services Officer
Highways Delivery Area Manager
Area Manager (North),
Neighbourhood Services
Press Officer
Deputy Director of Community
Services
Community Regeneration Manager
Chief Executive
Senior Planning Officer
Principal Solicitor
Planning Officer
Planning Officer
Senior Planning Manager

Eight members of the public and one member of the press were also in attendance at 3.00pm, and seven numbers of the public at 6.00pm.

Ch.'s Initials.....

(Councillor Castle in the chair)

141. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bridgett, Lawrie and Watson. Councillor Renner-Thompson had indicated that he would be arriving slightly late for the meeting.

142. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of North Northumberland Local Area Council held on Thursday, 20 December 2018, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record.

143. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

- Councillor Thorne declared a personal, but not pecuniary interest in relation to application 18/03729/FUL as he knew the applicant
- Councillor Hill declared an interest in relation to application 18/01164/OUT as Berwick Civic Society had objected; she was a member but was a member of the Society and on their executive but not on their planning and development committee, which had considered the item
- Councillor Seymour declared an interest in relation to application 18/01164/OUT as she was a member of Berwick Civic Society, who had objected, but not on their planning and development committee, which had considered the item
- Councillor Roughead declared an interest in relation to applications 16/01976/FUL and 18/01164/OUT as he had chaired Berwick Town Council meetings about the applications, but had not participated in the discussion about either item.

(Councillor Thorne in the chair)

144. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The report explained how the Local Area Council was asked to decide the planning applications attached to the agenda using the powers delegated to it. (Report and applications enclosed with official minutes as Appendix A.)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

145. 16/01976/FUL

**Development of 30 Dwellings - Amended 16/04/18
Land West Of Greenwood, Cornhill Road, Tweedmouth, Northumberland**

The application was introduced by Senior Planning Officer Tony Lowe, with the aid of a slides presentation.

Ch.'s Initials.....

In the absence of any public speakers, members asked questions to which officers responded, of which the key details were:

- an independent analysis had been undertaken to set the amounts of the financial contributions requested. The application was not considered to be viable if further contributions were required
- it was the type of application that might otherwise require health contributions, but due to site restrictions resulting from noise implications of the nearby industrial estate, none had been requested in this case
- if members requested an additional contribution, the applicant could appeal on the grounds of viability and possibly also ask for costs. Officer advice was not to require any additional contributions as otherwise the scheme would not be viable and possibly not even built. An inspector would likely consider what evidence existed of any change in circumstances and need since the previous application for the site was agreed. Officers would not recommend either requesting a voluntary contribution, as for example a member suggested one of £5,000 towards education. Even a small contribution might make the development not viable; the developer could only tolerate the current profit margins as they were based locally. A voluntary contribution could be requested, but this had already been addressed at the viability stage. Such a request would hold no planning weight
- planning officers looked at what education, health and sport contributions might be required using a carefully developed formula; it depended on what services were needed as needed for a particular community.

Councillor Roughead then moved that the application be granted subject to the conditions in the report, and a note be sent to the applicant and Planning Services speaking to the developer regarding the need for a play area locally and request a donation for a contribution towards funding and this be taken forward in conjunction with the County Council, local member and parish council. This was seconded by Councillor Seymour.

(At 3.15pm, Councillor Renner-Thompson arrived at the meeting, and took no part in application 18/01164/OUT.)

Members then debated the motion, of which the key details were:

- small contributions could greatly benefit such local parish areas. The local parish council had asked for a play area
- it was important that members could influence what community benefits were sought. Any negotiation would follow due process whilst also looking at possible options available
- a member also referred to how training on Section 106 had been requested and would be delivered.

The motion was then put to the vote, agreed unanimously, and it was thus:

RESOLVED that

(1) the application be GRANTED subject to the conditions in the report,

And additionally:

(2) A note be sent to the applicant and Planning Services speak to the developer regarding the need for a play area locally and request a donation for a contribution

towards funding one, and this be taken forward in conjunction with the County Council, local member and parish council.

146. 18/01164/OUT

Hybrid Application - Demolition of Reservoir, Full application for Conversion of Pumping Station for up to 6 Apartments and Outline application with Access, Layout and Scale for the Erection of 4 Dwellings - Amended 16/07/18 _ 28/11/18 Former Water Works, Dock Road, Tweedmouth, Northumberland

The application was introduced by Mr Lowe, who firstly provided a number of updates: the final word in paragraph 1.1 should read 'highways', not 'drainage'; for paragraph 7.25, lines 7 & 8, delete reference to 'by reserved matters'. Also, copies of a proposed amendment for condition 6 were circulated at the meeting, with the following additional wording highlighted:

Notwithstanding any description of materials in the application, no development relating to the pumping station shall be commenced (but excluding demolition of the covered reservoir) until precise details, to include samples, of the materials to be used in the construction of the external walls and/or roof(s) of the building(s) have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. All roofing and/or external facing materials used in the construction of the development shall conform to the materials thereby approved.

Reason: To retain control over the external appearance of the development in the interests of amenity and in accordance with the provisions of local plan policy F5.

Mr Lowe then continued introducing the application with the aid of a slides presentation.

Ross Weddle then spoke in objection to the application, of which his key points were:

- it was essential to assess whether an application would lead to flooding, and the Committee on Climate Change had predicted that sea levels would rise by 1m leading to 1.2 million houses being flooded nationally
- the proposed properties could be flooded within 20 years. It was unacceptable that people would be buying these properties without knowing the risk to them; a conversation about difficult choices was required. The application was legal but would add to the problems for the Council and residents
- no comprehensive flood assessment had been included with the application.

Katherine Simpson then spoke in support of the application, of which her key points were:

- Northumbrian Water were disposing of some assets when needed; the Local Area Council had agreed the previous application subject to a Section 106 agreement
- the application proposed a high quality scheme which would regenerate a disused site. It would provide a range of benefits and was a sensitive redevelopment of the site that would deliver economic benefits by creating construction jobs
- the application included a £6,000 coastal mitigation contribution
- the application was in line with the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); officers saw no new issues to compared to the previous application.

Members asked questions to which officers responded, of which the key details were:

- members were advised that any rise in levels this had been considered by the Local Lead Flood Authority, whose comments were in the report. They had no objection subject to the conditions of them and Northumbrian Water
- regarding any conflict in interest between Northumbrian Water being the applicant and also a consultee, they had been consulted as any new dwellings would have to be connected to the public sewer system. It was expected that Northumbrian Water would separate out their respective consultee and applicant roles to avoid any conflict of interest
- it was up to the applicant to submit what type of application they wished; originally it had been an outline application, which had been changed to a hybrid application. Reserved matters for the dwelling houses would be included in a future application
- the hybrid option enabled some flexibility for a potential buyer for the site. More information had been included in this application than had been back in July
- officers considered that the application included enough information to determine this application, and further information would be included in the next application
- such hybrid applications were in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act. It was just the principle of the development of the dwelling houses that was being determined in this application, with full consent being sought for the apartments
- details for the external appearance and landscaping of the dwelling houses would be controlled at the reserved matters stage
- the Highways Authority had seen the application and their comments provided.

Councillor Hill then moved that the application be deferred for a site visit to assess the visual impact and impact on the Conservation Area. This was seconded by Councillor Seymour, who referred to the site's proximity to the Goody Patch woodland/open space and the application site's special place in the local Conservation Area.

The motion was put to the vote and supported unanimously, so it was thus:

RESOLVED that the application be DEFERRED for a site visit.

147. 18/03729/FUL

Change of use to A4

Amble Tourist Information Centre, Queen Street, Amble, NE65 0DQ

The application was introduced by Planning Officer Chris McDonagh, with the aid of a slides presentation; he explained that the Local Area Council had agreed at the end of 2018 to a change to A1 use for the premises, and this application now proposed a change to A4 use for a micropub.

Guy Nutting then spoke in objection to the application, of which his key points were:

- the application would have an adverse impact on the amenity of local residents - on noise, disturbance, the character of the neighbourhood and

privacy. He referred to paragraph 54 of the NPPF and said he would withdraw his objection if his concerns were addressed by conditions

- although the proposed PA system was just vocal, this was still a noise concern. Although the windows were meant to be closed, how would this be policed? The windows of the development faced back towards his house next door. Where would people go to smoke?
- the area already had issues with antisocial behaviour, including broken glass from bottles. The area should be kept safe and tidy
- the site was near the war memorial, which was an area of peace; noise generated from this premises would compromise that
- many premises had to open long hours to remain viable; most micropubs opened only a short time, but this application proposed from late afternoon to late evening
- he would support the application if it did not include a music licence and the impact on local surroundings was addressed. He had supported the previous proposed A1 use for the building.

Members asked questions to which officers responded, of which the key details were:

- regarding whether some issues raised were either planning or licensing matters, members were advised that planning considerations and premises licences were similar in terms of nuisance and impact on residential amenity, and changing the use of a building to sell alcohol also required a premises licence
- residential amenity was assessed within the planning process, but live music was not a planning consideration. The opening hours to sell alcohol required both planning permission and a premises licence
- members could forward their comments but the Licensing Authority had their own decision to judge and their discretion could not be fettered by this Local Area Council. The Licensing Authority would be made aware of the outcome of this application here, but Public Protection would be separately consulted with regards to possible noise nuisance on licensing matters
- as Councillors Pattison, Roughead and Seymour were all members of the Licensing Committee, Democratic Services would ensure that they were not included in the panel of four members taken from the full membership of the committee to consider any licensing application for the premises in due course
- the opening hours were 7pm - 11pm on weekdays, 12 Noon to 11pm on Saturdays, and 12 Noon to 10.30pm on Sundays
- the war memorial and its walls were listed and the site was within the Conservation Area. Building Control had not objected as the application only proposed a change of use
- there were some overlaps in planning and licensing permissions. Planning were considering the opening hours, and Licensing Committee could amend them and also set the hours in which alcohol could be served. The applicant would have to abide by conditions set in both the planning and licensing processes
- paragraph 54 of the NPPF addressed the policy framework that could be used to add conditions. Officers were satisfied that the proposal was acceptable
- noise levels were a civil issue rather than a planning one; it was difficult to impose any levels without Public Protection's input, and it was not for planning to set this for a pub

- the closing times mentioned would be when the building had to shut; drinking up time would have to be included within those hours, and drinking up time was also a licensing matter.

Councillor Castle moved that the application be granted subject to the conditions in the report, but that residents need protecting. This Local Area Council was approving the change of use but should also ask the Licensing Authority to consider the interests of residents regarding noise levels and drinking up time; residential amenity should be protected regarding noise and opening hours. This was seconded by Councillor Clark, who considered it would be a suitable building for the proposed use as long as the noise and hours were controlled.

The motion was put to the vote and supported unanimously, so it was thus:

RESOLVED that

(1) the application be GRANTED subject to the conditions in the report;

And additionally:

(2) the Licensing Authority be asked to consider the impact on residential amenity regarding the impact of noise levels and drinking up time when considering any licensing application for the premises in due course.

148. 18/04272/CCD

Proposed construction of a new kitchen extension at the east end of the existing school hall; external fencing to the south boundary of the existing car park (as amended 17/12/18)

St Cuthberts RC First School, Prince Edward Road, Tweedmouth, Northumberland, TD15 2EX

The application was introduced by Planning Officer Jon Sharp, with the aid of a slides presentation. It was being presented to the Local Area Council as it was a County Council application.

Councillor Hill moved that the application be granted; she said it was a good school, that its expansion was a good sign and the extension was sympathetic to the building. This was seconded by Councillor Moore.

The motion was put to the vote and supported unanimously, so it was thus:

RESOLVED that the application be GRANTED subject to the conditions in the report.

149. Planning Appeals

Members received information about the progress of planning appeals.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

(4.16pm: the meeting then adjourned. It restarted at 6.00pm, with Councillor Castle back in the chair.)

OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS

Ch.'s Initials.....

150. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

This item was to reply to any questions received from members of the public, which could be either received in writing in advance or asked at the meeting.

The Chair advised local resident Mr Mike Maud that a question he had submitted in advance did not qualify under the question time guidelines for discussion at this meeting, but a written answer would be sent to him by the end of the week.

Mike Maud, local resident had also submitted a second question. A copy of the question and the answer from the portfolio holder had been circulated and a copy was provided to Mr Maud. Mr Maud read out his question, which he added to in light of a press release being issued about the matter on 23 January:

In November 2018 the County Council indicated a willingness to take back control of Academies. This was widely reported in local media, as was the fact that the proposal had been raised with the Education Secretary Damian Hinds during his visit to the county.

Berwick Academy is a stand-alone, isolated converter Academy without a sponsor. Since conversion it has faced and continues to face a series of severe and unique challenges. In 2017 attempts by the school to join the Three Rivers MAT fell at the first hurdle. Following an Ofsted report in March 2018, the school was placed in "Special Measures" and more recently it was served with a "Financial Notice to Improve". The school was currently without a permanent Head Teacher.

Despite interim support measures and the best efforts of the local staff team, the lack of long-term confidence in the school amongst wide sections of the community remains. The school desperately needs swift, decisive, clear and well publicised ongoing support and the stated intention of NCC is therefore to be welcomed.

Against this background can the committee provide detailed responses to the following:

1. Are the DfE / North RSC and Northumberland County Council currently actively and cooperatively engaged in discussions, with a view to bringing Berwick Academy back into LEA control?

Answer: The RSC and local authority are in such discussions but those discussions are at an early stage. The discussions centre around potential support options which can be developed to allow the local authority to be more formally involved in the improvement process.

2. Is there an existing mechanism that allows academies to revert to LEA controlled schools? If, as North RSC seems to be indicating, there are no such mechanisms, what alternatives are currently being considered and developed by the LEA?

Answer: There is no such mechanism within the academy legislation at present available for an academy to return to local authority control. There has been a previous case of an academy returning to LA control on the Isle of Wight. In that case the academy closed, the school was merged with a local primary school and reopened as a new all-through school under the control of the LA.

Mr Maud also added that the press release had referred to there not being a legal mechanism for bringing the school into local authority control but the issues with Berwick Academy had remained since its conversion and the lack of long term confidence remained.

In addition to the written answer, the Leader of the Council was present and provided A further update. The Council was working with the Regional Schools Commissioner to provide a resilience and support package for Berwick Academy. It was essential for the Council to have a high performing school in the north of the county. As it was an academy, it was the Regional School Commissioner's responsibility to oversee arrangements, but if the commissioner agreed to the Council's plans, the Council could help with raising standards within weeks. This had happened with Haydon Bridge High School; the school and community were very pleased with the improvements made there. If a school in Northumberland needed help, the Council would assist. Hopefully long term support would be received and updates would be provided.

A member referred to local residents' concerns about Berwick Academy. Academisation had not worked well there and change was needed. She was glad that Councillors Jackson and Daley were addressing the issue.

Mr Maud added that he welcomed the comments made. Schools could be good or poor whether they were academies or maintained, but Berwick Academy had all the disadvantages of academies, including having no sponsor. He was pleased to hear that longer term sustainable solutions were being considered. He confirmed that local communities would like to hear more detail soon and for actions to be taken in both the short and long term. The staff at the school had been doing very well in difficult circumstances and offered constructive support; they should be able to input into any way forward.

Democratic Services had a copy of Mr Maud's contact details, so he could be updated.

Brian Darling, Berwick resident referred to the appointment of Wayne Hemingway to market and brand Berwick. This was very good news and he hoped that the whole of Northumberland would get behind this project. If Berwick benefitted from resulting tourism, the rest of the county would also gain too.

Members welcomed this and the Leader referred to supporting such any work that provided such benefits.

151. PETITIONS

This item was to:

- (a) **Receive any new petitions:** to receive any new petitions. Lead petitioners were entitled to briefly introduce their petition, and a response to any petitions received would then be organised for a future meeting.

Local resident Mr Chris Napier introduced a petition that he had submitted days earlier regarding speed humps in Allerburn Lea, Alnwick. There had been no road humps in Allerburn Lea when he moved there in 2002. The road humps caused difficulties during inclement weather, and when the road was resurfaced, he said only 40 or the 200 houses had been asked their views on them, to which the responses had been 18 against and 17 in favour, and the outcome of this survey had been communicated once the bumps had been installed. Allerburn Lea's traffic flows had much changed since 2002, when stage 3 was still being built.

The Chair advised that a report responding to the petition would be produced and submitted for consideration at this Local Area Council's meeting on 21 March. Mr Napier would receive a copy of the report in advance of the meeting, also by email.

Councillor Moore, as one of the local members, added that he had spoken to the highways team about the background to the issue, which would be addressed in the report that would respond to the petition.

RESOLVED that a report responding to the petition be produced and considered at the Local Area Council's meeting on 21 March 2019.

- (b) **Consider reports on petitions previously received:** no reports were due at the meeting;
- (c) **Receive any updates on petitions for which a report was previously considered.**

A member stressed how petitions could be successful with reference to the petition about resurfacing Prince Edward Road in Berwick as the requested work was due to begin in March. Also, the petition about bus service reductions by Border Buses had also been successful; an announcement was due soon about the contractor who would be taking on the service.

152. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

Members received a verbal update from the Area Managers from Technical Services and Neighbourhood Services about any key recent, ongoing and/or future planned Local Services work for the attention of members of the Local Area Council, who then had the opportunity to raise issues with the Area Managers.

Technical Services Update from Graham Bucknall:

- the highways service was very busy, particularly with potholes at this time of year. Funding for patching work had paid dividends
- major Local Transport Plan (LTP) road resurfacing work had taken place across the north area in recent weeks, and further schemes were planned
- further resurfacing was also being undertaken at the Cross Keys in Thropton and the extensions to the car parks at Seahouses and Craster.

Members then asked questions to which officers responded, of which the key details were:

- concerns were expressed that Hope House Lane/Percy Terrace area in Alnwick was no longer gritted, given that it was a bus route, a major route for residents and there was no alternative route for residents and it was important to ensure a safe route along to the High School. Members were advised that there had been a problem with access for the gritter due to the roads' narrowness. Consideration would be given to whether a smaller vehicle could be utilised for that route
- thanks were expressed for patching work undertaken in Felton, Swarland School crossroads and Chatton Bridge. The news about work planned for between Longframlington to Newton on the Moor was also welcomed
- resurfacing work in Berwick was welcomed, as were the repairs undertaken on the old bridge
- thanks were expressed to officers for the arrangements put in whilst Chatton Bridge had been repaired. This had enabled young people to get to school and maintain access for local traffic
- concerns about incomplete work on Belford High Street would be followed up; the contractor would be asked to return to raise the drains and manhole covers up
- the resurfacing of Spittal Hall Road was excellent
- resurfacing work to Windsor Gardens in Alnwick was welcomed. The avenue along to Swansfield Park was important work to be undertaken as it was the main route to the Primary School
- members were advised that the possible extension of parking arrangements at Windsor Gardens Alnwick, might require either LTP or Members' Local Improvement Scheme funding.

Neighbourhood Services Update from Bob Hodgson:

- low level maintenance on trees had been undertaken. Chipping of Christmas trees for recyclable materials had been well received
- all mechanical sweeping targets had been met, and carefully organised around gritting routes
- increased facilities for Bamburgh car park were due in by February half term, and we are working through public toilets carrying out deep cleaning
- the new refuse collection routes were working very well
- arrangements were in place for the garden waste collection service for 2019 to begin.

Members then asked questions to which officers responded, of which the key details were:

- following concerns expressed about concerns about rubbish thrown from cars which gathered around the Felton Bridge to Alnwick stretch of the A1, members were advised of the Council's role in cleaning up to within 1.2 metres of the highway where it is safe to do so. Liaison took place with Highways England and their subcontractors. Work was organised where it was possible to access the highway, making use of existing traffic management where practical laybys were cleansed on a weekly basis during normal schedules.
- regarding concerns about a broken down vehicle on a bridge in Berwick, enquiries were being made into who owned it and about removing it

- reference to discussions about a possible partnership between the County Council and Northumberland Estates about tidying and maintaining some areas, given the borders between various land owned by each. Work had also been undertaken around the McDonalds site.

Mr Bucknall and Mr Hodgson were thanked for their attendance and it was:

RESOLVED that the information be noted and issues followed up where identified.

DISCUSSION ITEMS - CORPORATE

153. Medium Term Financial Plan 2019-22 and Budget 2019-20

Councillors Nick Oliver and Peter Jackson gave a presentation outlining the Council's strategy to its Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget. The presentation provided details of the approach to setting the budget for the next financial year and the broad impact this would have on the delivery of services. (Copy of presentation attached to the signed minutes.)

The presentation covered the following areas:-

- the context of the plan in relation to savings, reduction of debt, the capital programme and increasing demand for services
- an analysis of funding over the years 2014 to 2022
- provisional Local Government Finance Settlement
- additional funding available in Northumberland from extra Rural Services Delivery Grant, Rate Retention Levy Surplus and social care funding
- Savings would be spread over the Council whilst trying to protect front line services wherever possible
- movement in total borrowing from March 2013 to December 2018
- ambitious Capital Programme covering the themes of the Corporate Plan; Living, Enjoying, Connecting, Learning and Thriving. Reference was made to the ability to borrow to build new council housing; investing in equipment for new front line services; new bin wagons; the importance of tourism and its employment of 15,000 people; the parks investment programme; investment in coastal communities; investment in roads and the beginning of A1 dualling, funding in and Lottery support for the Union Chain Bridge; investing in new schools and new special educational school facilities
- budget position was challenging but under control with £36 million saving to be found
- investment from the North of Tyne Devolution Deal, £600m, could make a difference to people's lives whilst the Borderland Growth Deal could act as a catalyst for further investment.
- it was hoped that the plan would ensure that Northumberland was a more prosperous county
- it was challenging but work continued to take place to get the budget controlled and into a manageable position
- the next steps were:-

- invite views from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Local Area Councils
- final version to be considered by Council in February 2019 alongside the Medium Term Finance Plan 2019-22.

Members asked questions and points, of which the key details and responses included:-

- the Chair queried that it appeared that the income of the County County had not greatly changed since 2010, to which Councillor Oliver responded that there had been extra pressure on services, but claims that there had been a 40% funding cut were not true. Councillor Jackson added that all local authorities faced challenges, and Northumberland had pressure on its adult care budget resulting from its larger proportion of older people amongst the population. Special educational needs costs were also significant and it would be cheaper and more effective if the services could be provided in the county
- a member referred to the move from central government funding to business rates; as Northumberland did not have high business rates but high streets were having some financial difficulties, was this likely to have an impact on the local budget position? Councillor Oliver replied that there was no clear definition of the challenge, but there would be greater reliance on local income in future. The administration would have a focus on jobs, to bring more employers into the south east of the county, offshore work and supporting rural enterprise. The North of Tyne devolution deal enabled becoming rural scale up champions. Work continued towards infrastructure requirements too; 6% of the county needed proper Broadband connections; a new bid to the government to fund this was due to be submitted by the end of March
- a member welcomed the approach to tackle council debt which would help the future of Northumberland. It was important the Berwick and north Northumberland received a fair share of funding available as she considered this hadn't always been the case, but the promised new leisure centre was welcomed. Councillor Jackson referred to the attention being paid to Berwick including road repairs, car parking investment, the new leisure centre, support for schools and further education. The Borderlands initiative would also provide major investment in the area. Members added that involvement in Borderlands was very important and the north and west of Northumberland should engage to be part of it and discuss with colleagues over the border
- a member referred to the previous proposal for a loan for Alnwick Garden which she didn't support. Members noted that this was not going to be funded by the Council; Councillor Jackson added that given the strategic nature of Alnwick Garden an application had been made for national funding. The Chair added that it could attract an extra 250,000 visitors per year. Councillor Jackson added that it was intended to extend the tourism season; as such work was seasonal, it impacted on wage levels, which was something the administration were addressing. Another key target was to achieve 100% mobile phone reception coverage
- a member welcomed the £104m allocated for the living environment and the promised new council housing and the importance of more housing for older people, which had been identified as a need in the county. Councillor Jackson added that the Council had a role to identify gaps and build housing types which the private sector did not provide. A new housing strategy was due to be published within the next few months. Councillor Oliver also referred to

options for community housing and a central government grant received to assist

- a member welcomed the long term strategic view being taken. Tourism was important but seasons were short, wages were low and the cost of housing was high, so getting social housing in the right places for identified need was welcomed. Councillor Oliver referred to issues with second home ownership and action to increase rates following concerns about second home owners not contributing to communities; for example only 18% of Beadnell's housing was permanently occupied
- a member considered that it was important when designing housing to spread out rather than concentrate affordable housing. Councillor Jackson agreed that the previous format of council estates was not the way forward and the key was to have cohesive communities. Another member welcomed the investment in council housing planned
- a member referred to the need to put pressure on mobile networks about their coverage; for example Eglington and Craster had no reception. Councillor Oliver replied that he was meeting the Broadband team the following week and would also raise the issue of mobile phone reception
- a member welcomed the reinstatement of transport costs for post 16 students, investment in local services and how Northumberland was being promoted, including good bipartisan work with both Newcastle and North Tyneside Councils for the good of the region; Northumberland was looking outwards rather than being insular. He added that the Council had been burdened with financial pressures but considered that the budget could be balanced. Councillor Oliver agreed that their focus was long term, particularly with education and job investment, and future generations should see the benefit.

Councillors Jackson and Oliver were thanked for their attendance and it was:

RESOLVED that the presentation be received and comments noted.

At this point, as the meeting was approaching three hours in length it was RESOLVED to suspend standing orders to allow the meeting to continue beyond three hours in duration.

INFORMATION ITEMS

154. COMMUNITY CLOTHING SCHEME

Members received information about a local community clothing scheme (leaflet attached to the official minutes as Appendix B).

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

155. MEMBERS' LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES 2018/19

Members received a progress update on Members' Local Improvement Schemes during 2018/19 as at 1 January 2019 (report attached to the official minutes as Appendix C).

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

156. BERWICK REGENERATION COMMISSION

This was a standing item on the agenda for verbal updates. Tony Kirsop, Community Regeneration Manager, updated members on the following:

- a drop in session about the leisure centre development had taken place. A questionnaire about it on the County Council website had received 250 responses
- the last two meetings had considered issues regarding the Future High Street Fund; an all member briefing about this had also been organised to take place in March. Northumberland could however only put in one bid for one town in the county, which would feed into an investment plan for town centres.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

157. LOCAL AREA COUNCIL WORK PROGRAMME

Members were informed about 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. (List attached to the official minutes as Appendix D.)

Members were advised that in addition to planning applications, February's meeting would also include a report on the Local Transport Programme for 2019/20 and a presentation about the latest consultation on the Local Plan. Discussion was also taking place with members about when the next round of Community Chest presentations would take place.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

158. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Thursday, 21 February 2019 in St James' Church Centre, Alnwick.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....