

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

TYNEDALE LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Tynedale Local Area Council** held at Hexham House, Gilesgate, Hexham, Northumberland, NE46 3NH on Tuesday, 12 March 2019 at 4.30 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor G Stewart

(Chair, in the Chair for agenda items 142 - 144 and 149 - 155)

(Planning Vice-Chair Councillor R Gibson in the chair for items 145 - 148)

MEMBERS

T Cessford

A Dale

CW Horncastle

I Hutchinson

D Kennedy (no.s 149 - 156)

N Oliver

KR Quinn

JR Riddle

A Sharp (no.s 142 - 151)

KG Stow

OFFICERS

R Campbell

K Blyth

G Harrison

D Hunt

P Jones

D Lally

N Masson

M Patrick

V Robson

E Sinnamon

N Turnbull

Planning Officer

Principal Planning Officer

Highways Maintenance Senior
Team Leader

Area Manager (West),

Neighbourhood Services

Service Director - Local Services

Chief Executive

Principal Lawyer

Principal Highways Development
Management Officer

Building Conservation Officer

Senior Planning Manager

Democratic Services Officer

ALSO PRESENT

9 members of the public

1 member of the press

142. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Homer.

143. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Tynedale Local Area Council held on 12 February 2019, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

144. DISCLOSURES OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Sharp declared a personal and prejudicial interest in planning application 18/01850/FUL as he was Chair of Haltwhistle Town Council who had objected to the application and a member of Haltwhistle Partnership who had expressed concern. He would leave the meeting during consideration of that item.

Councillor Hutchinson declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in planning application 18/01850/FUL as he was a member of Haltwhistle Partnership.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Councillor Stewart 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.

145. DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The report requested the Local Area Council 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. (A copy of the report is enclosed with the minutes as Appendix A.)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

146. 18/03644/FUL

**Retrospective: Erection of a 5m x 3.5m external balcony at first floor level to rear of property
126 Western Avenue, Prudhoe, Northumberland, NE42 6QB**

The Principal Planning Officer introduced the report with the aid of a powerpoint presentation. Following the site visit held the previous day, the records had been checked and historic consent had been found for 6 of the approximately 15 properties in the street that also had balconies.

Mr. Chilton, the applicant, addressed the Committee in support of his application. He commented that:-

- Prior to constructing the balcony, he had checked with his neighbours with balconies who had told him they did not have planning permission and that was why they believed it had not been required.
- The balcony was approximately the same size as the other 15 balconies in the street.
- They had spoken to their immediate neighbours at 124 and 128 who had confirmed they did not have any objection to the construction of a balcony.
- The panel adjacent to 124 had been constructed with a solid material to ensure that the privacy of the occupants of 124.

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

- The high quality of the materials used was not disputed.
- Consents had been found for balconies of a similar scale and constructed with timber at 106, 110, 116, 120, 142, 144. Permission had been obtained between 2003 and 2007.
- Further investigation would need to be undertaken with regard to the remaining properties with balconies. It was possible that these properties could be immune from enforcement action due to the length of time the balconies had been in existence.
- The description for the balconies with consent had not contained the measurements.
- The balconies with permission would have been assessed against policies applicable at the time and not against current policies and therefore the first reason for refusal continued to apply.
- It was acknowledged that there were similar features in the streetscape.
- If Members were minded to approve the application, it would be brought back to the next meeting with appropriate conditions. These would likely include increasing the height of the sides to 1.7 metres and screening, such as obscured glass.

Councillor Hutchinson proposed that Members be minded to approve the application. The reasons being firstly that conditions to improve screening would mitigate the impact on the residential amenity of the neighbours to an

acceptable level. Secondly, he disagreed with the view taken by officers that the balcony was incongruous with the streetscape.

This was seconded by Councillor Stewart.

Some of the members expressed concern regarding the size of the balcony, the loss of amenity by neighbours and the potential that granting approval would create a precedent for similar applications elsewhere.

It was noted that the living space for properties in this area were on the first floor due to the sloping topography and therefore a balcony was considered to be appropriate for properties of this style. Also, each application would be considered on its own merits. However, there was concern regarding the privacy of the adjacent properties. Whilst the balcony did not directly abutt 128, due to it being separated by a third window belonging to host dwelling, they were able to view the windows of 128 during the site visit. It was agreed that the sides of the balcony should be constructed of the same material and height on each side of the balcony.

Officers confirmed that if the motion was successful the conditions would be determined at a future meeting of this Local Area Council.

On being put to the vote, the motion to approve the application, against officer recommendation, was as follows:- **FOR: 9; AGAINST: 2.**

RESOLVED that the application be **GRANTED** subject to consideration of conditions at a future meeting of the Committee.

147. 18/01850/FUL

**Proposed two semi detached, three bedroom properties, including landscaping and parking
Land North Of Mags Newsagents, Main Street, Haltwhistle,
Northumberland**

(5.00 pm Councillor Sharp left the meeting whilst the application was considered.)

The Planning Officer introduced the report with the aid of a powerpoint presentation. She provided the following update:

- An updated consultation response had been received from Highways following reconsideration of the application under the 2019 version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Highways now objected to the application due to concerns so significant that no reasonable action was likely to address the concern. A third reason for refusal was therefore proposed:
“3. Access to the site is substandard in terms of width preventing vehicles being able to pass, resulting in the potential for vehicles having to be

reversed onto the highway. Further, visibility for drivers emerging from the access onto Main Street is restricted, contrary to the best interests of highway safety. It is therefore considered that a safe and suitable access for all people could not be achieved, and as such the proposal would be contrary to Paragraphs 108, 109 and 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework.”

Mr Johnson, addressed the Committee to object to the application. His comments included the following:-

- The revised response from Highways issued the previous day stated that concerns were so fundamental that no reasonable action was likely to address the concern. The access had been observed during the site visit and was substandard and that in the interests of highway safety a safe and suitable access for all people could not be achieved and the proposal would be contrary to paragraphs 108, 109 and 110 of the NPPF.
- Local people should have a say in planning in terms of what was proposed be built. The Town Council had objected. The proposals would form overdevelopment of the site which would not be in keeping with the local area.
- Concerns raised by Mr Wood, planning consultant referred to:
 - Use of basic Ordnance Survey data was not sufficient as the maps were not to scale, did not provide sufficient accuracy of site boundaries or the position of existing buildings (including the sorting office) and their relative position in relation to the proposed development.
 - The scale of development and its orientation was inappropriate in terms of the character of the built up area and also in relation to its impact on neighbouring properties. It should not matter that the current condition of his garden required work.
 - The proposal was unacceptable and contrary to the requirements of the NPPF and section 12 on the need for good design.

It was reported that the public speakers who had registered to speak in support of the application were not present at the meeting.

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

- Whilst Northumbria Water did not permit a building over or close to main drains or sewers, this was a civil matter and did not preclude planning permission being granted.
- The passageway was already in use for vehicular access. The development proposed parking for 4 car parking spaces and the application had therefore been assessed on that basis.
- The key differences between the 2012 version of the NPPF and the 2018 version is that there is additional wording ensuring that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an ‘unacceptable impact on highway safety’. This is instead of the wording in the 2012 paragraph which states that the ‘residual cumulative

impacts on the road network would be severe' which must also be considered. In other words the new Paragraph 109 introduces a 2 test approach. Discussions had been held between planning and highways officers and it was considered appropriate to introduce a third reason for refusal, irrespective of the current use of the site by other vehicles.

Councillor Stow proposed acceptance of the recommendation to refuse the application for the reasons in the officer's report. This was seconded by Councillor Cessford and unanimously agreed.

Members shared officers concerns regarding highway safety, the design and queried whether there would be sufficient space for 4 vehicles.

RESOLVED that the application be **REFUSED** for the reasons contained in the officers report.

(5.26 pm Councillor Sharp returned to the meeting.)

148. PLANNING APPEALS UPDATE

A report was received which provided an update on the progress of planning appeals received. (A copy of the report is enclosed with the minutes as Appendix B).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

On the conclusion of the development control business at 5.05pm, Councillor Gibson vacated the Chair and the meeting adjourned as the remainder of the agenda consisted of other Local Area Council business scheduled to begin at 6.00 pm. Councillor Stewart returned to the Chair and continued the meeting at 6.00 pm.

OTHER LOCAL AREA COUNCIL BUSINESS

149. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair had agreed that an urgent item of business be included at the meeting due to the timing of work proposed on the A69. He invited Councillor Cessford to address the Committee.

A69 IMPROVEMENTS

Councillor Cessford referred to the recent changes proposed by Highways England for works to the A69 Bridge End roundabout at the entrance to Hexham. The works were unacceptable as they were likely to cause serious

problems for residents and businesses in Hexham and Acomb.

Council officers had been requested to arrange an urgent meeting with Highways England which had been held earlier that day. The meeting was attended by the Leader of the Council, the Executive Director of Place, the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Local Services, the Head of Technical Services, the Service Director of Local Services, Councillors Homer, Oliver and himself and two representatives from Highways England.

Highways England acknowledged the concerns which had been raised over their revised traffic management proposals. They agreed to look at revisions and would hopefully report back within 10 days. Officers and Councillors were united in their unhappiness, particularly as it could have been partially mitigated if there had been consultation.

Every aspect of the Highways England proposal was considered in depth at the meeting and all of the representations brought to the Council's attention over the last 7-10 days from businesses and residents were passed on.

The concerns had been noted by Highways England who agreed to come with changes in the near future. Due to the imprecise nature of the changes, it was difficult to address specific points in any greater detail at this meeting.

Councillor Oliver, who represented the Corbridge ward, referred to the impact on businesses and economy in Hexham, including the Egger plant. He was also concerned about the impact the proposals would have as people tried to find alternative routes and the serious issues that had arisen in Corbridge when the Hexham railway bridge had been closed.

He welcomed investment in the A69 by Highways England which was an important strategic route for the county's economy. He hoped that Highways England would work with the Council to minimise the amount of disruption resulting from the proposals, although it was inevitable that there would be some disruption. Joint communications would be issued when modified proposals were agreed.

The Service Director for Local Services confirmed that as soon as officers had received details of Highways England's proposed changes they had acted quickly to raise concerns and that this had resulted in representations being made by the Leader of the Council at the highest level in the Department for Transport. Issues raised included:

- Access to the French Garden Industrial Estate to ensure that there was safe access in an out, to avoid dangerous maneuvers and traffic delays.
- The 6 mile diversion proposed by Highways England was unacceptable and must be addressed.
- Highways England needed to improve their communication arrangements and to work closely with the County Council's staff to refine and refresh plans and respond to issues on the A69 and local road network as they

arose. The actions of road users could not be predicted and regular dialogue would need to be held to ensure road safety. This commitment had been at the highest level within Highways England and the Council awaited further information on the solutions proposed.

- The changes to the previous scheme had been made by Highways England due to concerns regarding road safety, impact of programme length and the need for construction traffic to cross live traffic.

Councillor Kennedy commented that it had been 10 years since there had been any significant investment in the A69 when the Haydon Bridge bypass had been constructed. He queried the benefit from the project given that there would only be a few seconds of time gained by not having to cross the roundabout; it was not an accident blackspot; it would not generate economic growth and therefore there would be little benefit to Hexham for a year of construction disturbance.

He referred to the 4 mile tailback resulting from the closure of 1 lane the previous week. The town would be uninviting to visitors and there would be a significant impact on residents and traders. He was of the opinion that discussions should be held in Hexham and at the Tynedale Local Area Council regarding the proposed works. There would also be a significant impact on places such as Corbridge and other surrounding areas. He suggested that more benefit would be gained from investment in the A69 west of Hexham in overtaking lanes and junction improvements.

Councillor Oliver commented that whilst dualling the A66 had been identified as the immediate priority by the Government, the removal of the two roundabouts on the A69 would help facilitate and was a precursor to the dualling of the A69 in the future. There was a fine balance required between the economic aspirations of the county and investment in the A69.

Members made the following comments:

- Highways England needed to be improve their consultation processes and discussions. They would be welcome at meetings of the Local Area Council with councillors to discuss the matter as they were aware of local issues.
- There was likely to be a significant impact in Riding Mill and other areas and reassurance was sought that there would be no impact on the safety of villages.
- The highways infrastructure in Hexham did not allow for the prompt flow of traffic from the slip road.
- Introduction of a slip road to the industrial area.
- Junction improvements and dualling were needed west of Hexham but the roundabout work was being funded by money from the congestion fund which could not be utilised for road safety schemes.

It was noted that representatives from businesses located in Hexham were present at the meeting including MKM Building Supplies, a catering unit and garden centre.

The Service Director of Local Services confirmed that the Government's Road Investment Strategy published in 2017 had identified these works as part of the strategic growth network and by undertaking these works now, it could help improve the business case for the dualling of the A69 in the future. Dualling of the A69 was estimated to cost £1.5 billion and given the scale of investment needed, would have to be implemented in a phased approach. Investment in the A69 was positive but these works had not been identified as a Council priority. However, they would work with Highways England to ensure the disruption, safety and congestion issues were minimised.

Members of the public were recommended to keep in contact with the elected members for updates.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

150. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Russell Taylor, Hexham, made reference to the ongoing work regarding the proposals for the Styford roundabout at Corbridge and queried the logic of the proposals for Bridge End roundabout proceeding if the Styford roundabout did not go ahead. He referred to his own correspondence with Highways England and the suggestion that the right turn onto the A6079 be reinstated. He had been advised that this was the responsibility of the Council. The Service Director of Local Services confirmed that this was one of a number of options being considered. They were considering the impact of stacking traffic and the effect on Tyne Mills.

Mr Taylor also made reference to the 14 mile diversion proposed by Highways England, use of a mini roundabout and yellow box junction. Mr Taylor commented that his business would not survive a year with the disruption from the proposals. The Service Director of Local Services confirmed that the 14 mile diversion was not acceptable and Highways England had given a commitment that the current proposals would not go forward. They were considering re-instating the right turn into the French Garden Industrial Estate but needed to ensure there was adequate length for vehicles to be stacked to ensure the roundabout was not blocked. The use of traffic signals or a possible temporary mini-roundabout were also being considered.

151. PETITIONS

This item was to:

a) Receive any new petitions:

i. Hexham, Community Centre Crossing

Stephen Ball and Tom Pearson, Trustees of Hexham Community Centre attended the meeting to present a petition to request the installation of a pedestrian crossing outside the Community Centre as part of the old swimming baths redevelopment. The Community Centre was a hub for activities including many who were young, old or vulnerable. The pedestrian crossing was essential to enhance the safeguarding of all those that used the facility.

They were pleased that the derelict building was being brought back into use and suggested that the Section 106 monies be utilised to pay for the crossing. The developer also supported the crossing and had been one of the first to sign petition as well as many of the 21 user groups at the community centre. A crossing would also be useful for school children at The Sele First School, nursery groups at the centre and the older occupants at the swimming pool development.

A report would be requested for the meeting of the Tynedale Local Area Council on 14 May 2019.

ii) Removal of double yellow lines from Beech Grove, Prudhoe

It was also reported that a petition had been received requesting the removal of yellow lines from Beech Grove Prudhoe.

The Local Area Council would receive a report at the meeting on 14 May 2019.

b) Consider reports on petitions previously received:

There were none to consider.

c) To consider updates on petitions previously considered:

i) Eastwood Park Path, Prudhoe

The Chair reported that work on refurbishing and upgrading the pavillion for was underway. It had been transferred from Active Northumberland to NCC who were in asset transfer negotiations with Prudhoe Youth Football Club. The pavilion would be available for football use for the start of the 2019/20 season.

Discussions and identification of funders were ongoing for a path suitable as a training area for Prudhoe Plodders.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

152. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

a) Environmental Enforcement and Environmental Campaigns Update

A report was received which provided an update on dog control enforcement and the Green Dog Walkers Campaign since it was last considered in September 2018. (A copy of the report is enclosed with the minutes as Appendix C.)

In response to a question, Councillor Riddle, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Resilience confirmed that the information on fixed penalty notices would be able to be broken down by LAC area as he received regular updates. A copy of the data for 2017/18 was also requested for comparison.

The Green Dog Walkers Scheme had exceeded expectations with over 2000 members.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

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

Neighbourhood Services:

- The garden waste collection service had re-commenced on 4 March 2019.
- Seasonal grounds maintenance staff were in the process of being recruited.
- Following a consultation in 2018, staff would soon be working seasonal hours i.e. longer hours in the summer and shorter hours in the winter months. The teams and rotas were in the process of being configured.
- The service supported community litter picks with the provision of equipment and collection of waste. A form and further information was available on the Council's website.
- Better progress was being made with the cyclic street sweeping following the acquisition of a new sweeper and driver.

The Area Manager agreed to speak to members regarding issues raised:

- On the A68 and A695.
- The Dene, accessible off Cuddy's Lane and the allotments in Hexham
- Holeyn Hall Road, Wylam

Technical Services:

- Congratulations were passed to Andy Olive who had recently been appointed to the post of Highways Delivery Area Manager on a permanent basis.
- 7800 repairs had been completed following customer requests for highways maintenance.

- There had been 494 insurance claims following the Beast from the East which had required extra resource to resolve. The backlog has since been cleared.
- Completion of 51 LTP schemes.
- 150,000 square metres of surface patching had been undertaken.
- Work had been completed in December 2018 to repair the highway following the landslip at Eals Bridge, costing in excess of £1 million.
- Work to resurface Front Street, Prudhoe had commenced the previous week; C195 was nearly complete; resurfacing of Redesmouth bridge was about to start and Main Street, Haltwhistle would be starting on 25 March 2019.
- The gully wagon and drainage gangs were continuing with their programme.

Councillor Riddle queried the duration of the daytime road closure at Wanneys Road and enquired whether it could be shortened as it was a long diversion for residents and the Council needed to be mindful of the impact on local residents. The Service Director of Local Services agreed to refer the comment to the service. He commented that they tried to minimise the disruption but that sometimes the extent of the construction works being undertaken inevitably meant that a full road closure was necessary.

The Chair, on behalf of all members, expressed his appreciation to all local services employees for the work that was undertaken.

RESOLVED that the updates be noted.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

153. 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 D.)

It was agreed that the following suggestions be referred to the Local Area Chairs Briefing for consideration for inclusion in the work programme:

- Updates from Highways England regarding work on the A69 (including visual presentation of solution proposed).
- An update on Hexham Hospital following demand for services during the winter period.
- An update from Northumbria Police with local statistics (following the hub? format).
- Invite North of Tyne Mayor to a Tynedale LAC meeting.
- Flood protection update by the Environment Agency.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and the above items be referred to the Local Area Council Chair's Briefing.

154. MEMBERS' LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES 2018/19

The Local Area Council received a progress update on Members' Local Improvement Schemes as at 1 March 2019. (A copy is enclosed with the minutes as Appendix E.)

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

155. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 9 April 2019 at Hexham House, Gilesgate, Hexham at 4.00 p.m.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____