

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CRAMLINGTON, BEDLINGTON AND SEATON VALLEY LOCAL AREA COUNCIL

At a meeting of **Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council** held Cramlington, Northumberland, NE23 6YB on Wednesday, 18 September 2019 at 4:30 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor C Dunbar (Chair)

MEMBERS

L Bowman
W Crosby
W Daley
S Dungworth
A Hepple

M E Richards (part)
M Robinson
I C F Swithenbank
R J Wallace

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

H Bowers
G Gavin
T Gribbin

L Howley

Democratic Services Officer
Head of Neighbourhood Services
Neighbourhood Services Area
Manager
Community & Environmental Health
Manager

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Inspector P Patterson
Assistant Inspector S Nicklin

Northumbria Police
Northumbria Police

26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Flux and Swinburn.

27. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council held on Wednesday, 17 July 2019, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Ch.'s Initials.....

Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council - 18 September 2019

28. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Adam Hogg, resident, conveyed his thanks for the prompt response to his query raised at the meeting of 17 July.

Mr Hogg continued and stated that NCC were amongst several authorities recognising climate change and queried whether the Council had set any green budgets, eg, planting of trees? Mr Hogg was informed that trees and shrubs would be planted in Cramlington. NCC were also committed to being carbon neutral and as part of the refurbishment of County Hall, a solar carport would be erected. It was reported that NCC was the most efficient/green Council in the north east and a lot of schools were planting trees and shrubs. Also any ideas would be welcomed.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services added that new trees were being planted across the county in green and urban spaces.

A member stated that tree planting was not a new concept and referred to tree planting which had taken place after coal industries had closed.

29. PETITIONS

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

30. LOCAL SERVICES ISSUES

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

Technical Services Update

In the absence of Michael Carle, Highways Delivery Area Manager, Tony Gribbin, Services Area Manager gave the Technical Services update:

Resurfacing work had been carried out at Bradbury Court, New Hartley; East Cramlington to Wheatfields roundabout, Bebside Road, A1172, Cramlington; A1068, Cramlington and Nelson roundabout.

Upcoming resurfacing work would be carried out at Nelson Avenue, Cramlington. Drainage improvements and civil works at Stead Lane, Bedlington and final surfacing at Cambois.

A zebra crossing had been installed Astley Road, Seaton Delaval next to the high school.

Westmorland Way roundabout was still ongoing and work was on schedule.

The small patching and drainage team would be up and running to get a 7 week patchment programme completed before winter.

Members raised concerns in relation to Beaumont Grange, Seghill and the pedestrian crossing/temporary barrier at the Astley Community High/Whytrig middle schools site on Astley Road in Seaton Delaval.

Neighbourhood Services Update

Waste services was operating as scheduled. Grass cutting had proved challenging due to the wet weather in August. There had also been a strong regrowth of weeds due to the warm wet weather which had knocked back progress. If any areas had been missed, the Neighbourhood Team should be informed.

Preparation of the winter maintenance programmes were taking place ahead of the winter weather.

Concerns were raised regarding weeds in Hartford and Councillor Robinson stated that she had met with the Highways Delivery Manager and were in discussion with the contractor. Another concern was raised regarding the treatment and mechanism of removing weeds.

Greg Gavin, Head of Neighbourhood Services reported that the Council could not use domestic weed killer due to strict legislation. He also advised that a number of alternative methods had been researched which had proved not as productive or cost effective.

RESOLVED that the information be noted and issues raised by members be followed up by Local Services.

DISCUSSION ITEMS - CORPORATE

31. Policing and Community Safety Update

Liam Howley, Community and Environmental Health Manager reported that the Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley areas were covered by two Victim Offender Location Areas (VOLs) and two Police Sectors.

Mr Howley reminded members that the The Local Multi Agency Problem Solving (LMAPS) meetings had been replaced by the Victim, Offender, Location (VOL) meetings. These were a multi agency problem solving meeting chaired by the Council and held monthly in each Police sector. In January those meetings had

been reviewed and some changes were implemented to improve partnership involvement and consistency. In particular the meetings were now chaired by a Senior Community Safety Officer with a broader range of agencies attending. In terms of statistics, reports of Anti Social Behaviour in the area for the period 2018-19 had been 128.

Brief details of the ongoing youth disorder in Bedlington were provided and Mr Howley confirmed agencies had been trying to identify the key leaders and the Community Safety Team had been working with youth providers in diversion activity.

Temporary CCTV had been installed in Bedlington to assist the identification of offenders and provide reassurance however, Bedlington Town Council had now installed permanent cameras to replace those and it was confirmed that Housing and Public Protection also had a pool of rapid deployable CCTV units available for use on a temporary basis.

Members were reminded that part of the process to replace LMAPS with VOL was to provide each member with a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) within the Community Safety Team. Mr Howley confirmed that the presentations to the Local Area Committees were being used to gather feedback from members about how those arrangements were working in practice. To date both both positive and negative feedback had been received and officers would review the process to address any member concerns.

A member raised queries in relation to youth disorder, hate crime and knife violence in relation to excluded children.

The Community Safety Manager stated that the issue of excluded children would be one of many factors an investigation would consider. However, in all cases identification of the young person in question was key. Hate crime could be reported either to the Police or to the Council and members were reminded about the new national led initiative on knife crime.

In response to a comment regarding the Single Point of Contacts, these could be recirculated to members.

A member asked if the number of types of ASBs could be listed and circulated to members once a month as an information item. The Community Safety Manager would investigate this.

A multi agency approach had been requested by a member at a previous meeting and had not received a response. She also queried whether officers were deployed to the front line or back up to the police. It was advised that Community Safety primary role was to investigate ASB and to coordinate multi agency working, in particular the work of the VOLs. In a situation which required a '999' type response then the Police were the more appropriate agency.

The problem of speeding quad bikes down Astley Road and youths with baseball bats had been reported to the police which the Council had not followed up. Mr Howley advised that they should be reported as a crime to the Police. If members were not happy with the level of service provided by the Community Safety Team then this would be followed up.

In response to the comment regarding the link between youth disorder and permanent exclusions, it was reported that a Task & Finish Group had been established to investigate the causes of fixed and permanent exclusions, working with partners to improve the situation. In the period 2014 - 18, there had been a rapid increase in the number of both fixed and permanently excluded pupils in Northumberland where permanent exclusions had increased by 203% and fixed term exclusions by 209%. In the last term, the first dataset had shown a 28% reduction in permanent exclusions and a 26% reduction in fixed term exclusions.

A tender exercise had been agreed at Cabinet to create a framework to support the provision of alternative education for children of statutory age due to the approaching expiry of an existing tender together and the increase in the number of permanent exclusions.

A member referred to antisocial behavior in Holywell and stated that he would like to see more activities provided by Active Northumberland. A number of activities had taken place over the summer holidays but something more permanent was required to attract youngsters.

In response to a query regarding CCTV footage, it was advised that in order to view the footage, it would depend on what the purpose was for viewing.

Inspectors Phil Patterson and Steve Nicklin were in attendance to give an overview and answer questions about policing in the Cramlington and Bedlington areas.

Inspector Patterson said he had only been in post for two weeks, but had served 22 years in the police force. He highlighted the following:

- Antisocial behaviour in Bedlington from organised individuals. The Police had tried several diversionary tactics including schools and parents in the hope of avoiding the justice system. The Police were looking how to address the situation
- Parents dropping off their children at Atlee park with alcohol
- The Neighbourhood Team were taking a very hands on approach
- Within the next 12 weeks, searches would be carried out with licensing checks in pubs and searches for weapons
- A consistent approach was needed
- Northumbria Police had lost a third of their officers over the last seven years and had to work in a smarter way. Difficult decisions were being taken and there had been changes made. For example, a Police Officer would no longer attend if a car was stolen but a crime number would be issued.

- With regard to antisocial behaviour (ASB) in young people, funding had been received for high quality hand held cameras which would be of real benefit. Officers would be able to video from a distance and identify the individuals concerned. They would then visit the parents of first time offenders whilst, for repeat offenders, intervention methods would be used

Inspector Steve Nicklin then spoke about the Cramlington area and highlighted the following:

- A new operating model was in place for neighbourhood teams. Trevor Oakley was leaving in November and would be replaced by Neil Hall as Inspector.
- The makeup of the teams would change, there would be five Police Officers and four Community Service Officers. Shift patterns would change to provide extra coverage and greater capacity
- Crime figures in Cramlington were quite positive. Vehicle crime had reduced and knife crime had dropped to 55% with 5 recorded offences
- There had been an increase of burglary offences at 22%
- Three prolific burglary offenders had been caught, as a result crime numbers had improved
- One known youth and one unknown youth had been arrested for antisocial behaviour. Cramlington did not have a big issue with antisocial behaviour and figures were down by 33% compared to last year due to Operation Disband which had targeted the ring leader
- A Darker Nights Campaign was to be carried out at Brockwell, Cramlington
- Drug crime had reduced in Cramlington however, there were still small areas with drug issues

Discussion followed during which the key points raised by members and responses from officers were:

- The need to proactively respond to drug crime
- The concern of eradicating crime from one area but being transferred to another area. It was advised that evidence and intelligence was needed to issue warrants
- It would be useful if feedback could be provided to the community after a crime had taken place
- Cars racing from Blyth to Whitley Bay. Recently a young person had been killed
- Seghill and Seaton Valley had a lot of people coming in from other areas carrying out drug related activity, eg county lines
- There had been a lot of problems in Seaton Delaval and officers were thanked for their intervention

Inspector Nicklin reported that some warrants had been executed in the Seghill and Seaton Valley areas after cannabis farms had been found. In relation to speeding, cameras had been installed which had been very effective.

Members thanked both officers for the information they had provided and congratulated them on their approach to reducing crime.

RESOLVED that the update be received and members comments be noted.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

32. Members' Local Improvement Schemes

Members were provided with an update on Members' Local Area Schemes during 2018/19 as at 1 November 2018. (Report attached with the signed minutes).

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

33. Local Area 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.)

A member expressed concern at the lack of public attendance and suggested an alternative way of promoting the meeting, eg advertising via social media.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

34. Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 16 October 2019.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm.

AI

CHAIR _____

DATE _____