Northumberland County Council  
Policy Board  
9 December 2014

North Area Committee Feedback Form  
10 November 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Officers present</th>
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| 15 members of the public  
1 member of the press  
Galliford Try representatives (4) | G Barlow, K Bartlett, M Bird, G Bucknall, H Clear-Hill, G Davies, B Hodgson, D Lally, B Ledger, M Robinson |

**Agenda Items and Resolutions**

- **Apologies for absence** – received from Councillors Armstrong, Dickinson, Hunter, G Jones, Murray, Sanderson, Smith and Tebbutt.
- **Minutes of last meeting** – agreed.
- **Declarations of interest** – none.

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<th>Actions</th>
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| Noted  
Agreed |

**Public Question Time**

**Victoria Fyffe, Dunstanburgh Castle Hotel and Alnwick Cycling Club:** Ms Fyffe was not in attendance but had submitted written questions in advance of the meeting, a copy of which and a previous letter she had written to an officer were circulated to the committee. Her questions were read out:

“1. I would like a full review of the decision-making process that led to the Alnmouth to Warkworth cycle path being resurfaced recently in Fibredc. There has been a significant amount of denial & buck-passing between Northumberland Council, the AONB & Sustrans;
2. I would like to propose that the path be returned to a smooth surface, so that cyclists can navigate this stretch of the county safely; and
3. With regards to reviewing the process by which this all came about, my primary concern is that there was no consultation with the actual users of the path (Alnwick Cycling Club for example), who also happen to be the taxpayers funding the fiasco. I propose that an obligation to consult with local user groups is written into council protocol when making such decisions.”

Programme and Production Manager Margaret Robinson responded by providing details of the status of the path and its commissioning and funding. On inspection, the surface did have a large covering of gravel, so Mrs Robinson would have a discussion with colleagues about the technical specification for the Fibredc, and then discuss remedial measures with the contractor.

Members discussed the matter in detail, with points made about how it also included pedestrian access, how the Fibredc was a good surface and the gravel should be removed urgently; that consultation had previously taken place about the path; that the path suffered from a lack of run off, how there should be some signage to advise cyclists when they were approaching a main road and there were some dangerous blind bends; cycling should be encouraged and pathways fit for purpose. It was also added that the new Leisure and Tourism Working Group had a role in assessing whether tourist infrastructure was fit for purpose and any changes would be considered by that group. There were a number of considerations to be explored including who the track should be for, but it was agreed that the members whose divisions it affected, Councillors H Cairns, Castle and Watson would take the issue forward.
Eva Spoor raised that there were nearly 1,000 children at school in Northumberland who were born outside the UK in Europe and who needed support in learning English as an additional language. This would enable them to be educated properly and play a full part in school life. The Council received an Ethnic Minority Grant of around £100,000 from Central Government for this purpose yet made hardly any provision available; did it not understand the children needed support and what happened to the grant money? Mrs Spoor also raised that a charity, Mohr Language Support, offered her son English classes, and could the charity not be asked to do classes in more schools for more children so the Council could use the money more efficiently?

Councillor Arckless responded with details of discussions including meeting with the director of the Mohr Language Support charity and meetings between officers and the school in question. He provided a full response to the questions raised (details in the minutes of the meeting). Further clarification was also provided about how funding was pupil driven and the role of the Schools Forum in the allocation of central funding. The County Council did not provide funding direct. Additional funding would however be available from April 2015.

A written question had been received from Mr Norman Walker, NE66 1PA, regarding the Policy Board’s decision on 7 October 2014 about the Tyne and Wear Bus Delivery Project in relation to implications arising from the House of Commons’ Transport Select Committee report on passenger transport in isolated communities. A copy of the written response was circulated to all members at the meeting, and there was no further discussion as it was agreed that it was a policy decision that had been taken by the Council.

Councillor David Parker, Morpeth Town Council, NE61 2UJ expressed concerns about the position regarding alleyways in Morpeth, as only one was adopted by the County Council and the others were technically in private ownership, and it was considered that one at Bridge Street was a health hazard. He asked if the Bridge Street alleyway was a health hazard, would the County Council use its public health responsibilities to enforce the private owners to take action, and if this couldn’t be done, could it act under its public health aegis, and what advice would the County Council give to Morpeth Town Council and could Morpeth Town Council try to adopt such alleyways, as this could arise as an issue elsewhere? It was noted that this issue had been looked into by enforcement officers, and the local LMAPS group had taken action about antisocial behaviour concerns regarding the site. It was agreed that an update be provided at the committee’s next meeting, and a direct response be provided to the question about what the County Council would advise Morpeth Town Council to do.

Councillor D Rixon, Newton on the Moor Parish Council, NE65 9JY raised their involvement in the Superfast Broadband scheme and efforts to leaflet local areas to encourage support for attaining access. They had been told in 2013 that their area would be enabled by the end of 2014 however they were not due to be upgraded as the local area had a secondary distribution box, and access was now expected during 2017/18. Mr
Rixon hoped that help could be provided to bring about their access quicker.
The Chair added that a Broadband update would be provided at the committee’s next meeting, and how areas which demonstrated a high level of demand for access should get it quickly but he would in the meantime follow up Cllr Rixon’s request with Mr Arnold and Mr Colwell in Information Services.

### Petitions

| a) To receive any new petitions: None. |
| b) To consider reports on petitions previously considered: members considered a report which responded to a petition requesting street lighting to be installed at Abbeylands at Alnwick (copy of report attached to the official minutes as Appendix A). Lead petitioner Mr Weatheritt attended and spoke in support of his petition, stressing that lighting the street would make local residents feel safer, and the number of local requests made for street lighting. Discussion followed in which points were made by members in support of the petition as the street was a main approach street to Alnwick, and whether the 30mph zone limit from Cannongate should be extended to include the location as Abbeylands was currently in a 60mph zone. It was agreed that Councillor Bridgett would raise this at the Policy Board/Area Chairs Working Group. |
| c) To consider updates on petitions previously received: None, although it was agreed that an update on the petition would be provided at the next meeting about parking at Alnmouth railway station be provided at the next meeting. |

### DISCUSSION ITEMS – CORPORATE

**Street Lighting Modernisation Project**

Members received a presentation from project manager Gavin Barlow about the Street Lighting Modernisation Project. The aim of the project was to replace all life expired street lighting columns and modernise the street lighting stock in Northumberland by investing in new technologies. The presentation covered the current position regarding street lighting ion the county, key drivers for the project, the approach and scope of the project, the delivery programme and strategy, the communications plan, benefits and outcomes, and the flexibility in the project (copy of presentation attached to the official minutes).

Detailed discussion followed in which key points were made about how Amble and Morpeth now had the potential to move from the third to the second year of the programme; the pay back period for the funding; how current stock suffered from 10,000 - 11,000 faults per year but the new stock should be free of faults for 10-20 years; following a 64% reduction in labour time from the reduction in faults, staff would be reskilled for other work; welcoming of the reduction in
costs and energy costs; a welcoming of consultation on Dark Skies issues; giving consideration to lighting in conservation areas and ensuring it fit heritage requirements; consideration given to dropping the lighting output from midnight each day; consultation about the work before it started to lessen the impact on people who used wheelchairs and pushchairs; and close working with electricity companies.

**Update on Leisure Services in Northumberland**

Members received a presentation from chief Executive of Active Northumberland Bruce Ledger on the latest position on arrangements for the provision of leisure services in Northumberland, following the previous presentation given to the committee in April 2014. Details were provided about the latest position regarding Active Northumberland and changes, opportunities and issues resulting from the changes. Information was also provided about key officer contacts in the service.

Discussion followed in which the contact list for officers was welcomed. Questions were asked to which it was responded that no facilities were due to be closed during 2015/16; all the contractual issues regarding the merger, some of which were raised during the previous presentation in April, had now been resolved; and there was a list available of who would be entitled to receive discounts depending on what benefits they received.

Mr Ledger was thanked for his presentation and he offered to provide further updates when requested.

**Northumbria Flooding Community Partnership**

Lynne Dunleavy provided a verbal report on her work with communities in Northumberland, to help them become more resilient to flooding; the project had started 2009 responding to the floods of 2008/9, aiming to replicate the kind of self-help groups that were being set up to re-act to wildfires in the uplands. Details were provided about the funding and hosting of the project, its key objectives, what kind of activities were undertaken, and what made the project special.

A member commented that excellent work had been done in Morpeth through the partnership.

**Northumberland Local Heroes Scheme**

Members received a verbal update from Internal Communications and Branding Manager Gareth Davies about the launch of the Northumberland Local Heroes Scheme, which was not about giving prizes but instead recognising what big and aspiring contributions some people made to their communities. Members received details of the nomination process and examples of some nominations; the first eight awards were to be handed out the following week.

It was queried whether there could be too much duplication across the Love Northumberland, Best of Northumberland and the Local Heroes scheme; could they be better co-ordinated to avoid this? Members were advised that there were differences as for example Love Northumberland had one winner whereas this scheme was about inspiring many people.
and would be a rolling programme. There was space for all the schemes mentioned as they were different.

**INFORMATION ITEMS**

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<th>Winter Services Preparedness and Resilience</th>
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<td>Members received information about the pre-season preparations ahead of the forthcoming winter services period (copy of report attached to the official minutes as Appendix B). A request was made for a list of the contact details for staff available during out of hours periods.</td>
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<td>To be followed up with Technical Services</td>
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<th>Future Meetings</th>
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<td>It was noted that the next meetings would take place respectively at Longframlington, Stannington, Berwick, Morpeth and Holy Island.</td>
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