

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

TOWN AND PARISH LIAISON WORKING GROUP

At a meeting of the **Town and Parish Liaison Working Group** held in the **Council Chamber, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF** on **Friday, 1 February 2019** at **11.00 am**

PRESENT

Councillor G Roughead
(in the Chair)

MEMBERS

Cessford T
Dunn E

Wallace R

TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILLORS

Hughes D
Peden M
Potts J
Sambrook A

Thurgood F
Vaughan P
Weir C
Wood M

OFFICERS

Bowers H
Johnston P
Jones P
Kirsop T
Rose J

Sanderson J

Democratic Services Officer
Executive Director of Place
Service Director - Local Services
Community Regeneration Manager
Head of Economic and Policy
Regeneration
Senior Planning Manager (Planning
Policy)

ALSO PRESENT

Sanderson HGH
Dodd R

Cabinet Member
Councillor

Nicholson D
Rickett, S

SLCC
NALC

15. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Jackson, T Hood, A Varley, A Wallace and D Woodward along with M Anderton D Francis.

16. Notes of Previous Meeting

The notes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 31 September 2018 were received.

In response to a comment raised regarding the last bullet point on page 4, it was advised that this would be discussed under the Local Services Update item.

17. Local Services Update

Councillor Sanderson, Cabinet Member for Local Services advised of the following:-

- A roadside litter campaign had been launched with adverts on buses and videos highlighting the dangers of plastic to wildlife. The County Council spends up to £2.6 million a year cleaning up litter. The same campaign would run in the autumn.

P Jones, Service Director - Local Services and Councillor Sanderson advised of the following:-

- A waste strategy developed in 2003 was now under review. When the strategy first started 5% of waste was recycled with 95% of waste going to landfill, that figure was now 30-40% recycled and 5-10% landfill. A Government programme was looking at a whole range of projects to get up to a 50% recycling rate. Some initial modelling had been carried out to assess the impacts with three options
 - kerbside glass
 - extending the range of materials that could be put in the normal kerbside bin and not normally accepted
 - looking at separate food waste which comprised of the biggest wastage and involved a whole new infrastructure. A report would be brought back to Cabinet in the summer
- At the last meeting members were advised of the changes in bin routes. This had taken place during October and November and it was reported that this had been very well organised
- There had been a 1.6 increase in garden waste last year. It was hoped to make this self-financing. Two additional crews had been employed and it was hoped to provide a more reliable service this year. Letters had been sent out to customers advising them of collection dates and charges of £40 per year, £2 per collection. Customers were encouraged to advise the Council of any details electronically and also make payments on line. These would be entered into a prize draw.
- In response to comments that NALC had not been consulted on potential changes to the frequency of work by NCC and the provision of precepts, Mr Jones advised that the proposal of annualised hours was set across the whole of the grounds maintenance team. At present a significant number of seasonal staff were employed and it was

proposed to reduce the number of seasonal staff during the summer period and the grounds maintenance team would work longer hours over the summer and 4 days a week during the winter. The changes were not expected to have a material impact on the service standards.

- Some discussion took place on the cycle of hedge cutting; verge maintenance and core standards. It was advised that a smaller Working Group would be set up with NALC and SLCC to look at service standards
- As part of the parks improvement, there would be a number of improvements at Plessey Country Park, Bolam Park and Druridge Bay Park and work going on through the county including Hirst Park, Gallagher Park, Rothbury Riverside and Blyth Beach.
- £7.8 million had been received from the Government as part of the LTP, with £2.6 being spent on roads and projects in industrial estates and the replacement of new cattle grids and also £150 thousand being spent on road lining. An email invitation had been circulated to all Parish and Town Councils regarding the presentation of the LTP at February's Local Area Councils
- So far 8,000 tonnes of grit had been spread as the winter had been quite mild. It was intended to keep to a 3 cycle pattern. The service was fully equipped. Six additional gritters had been purchased and investment in salt storage at Cowley Road, Blyth, Allendale and Powburn. The Council was also looking for voluntary snow wardens in towns and villages with dialogue with the Parish and Town Councils
- 96% of the works on street lighting was now completed and it was expected that all works would be completed by April this year. Parish and Town Councils were asked to report any outstanding issues. There had been a manufacturing fault with paint systems and 13000 columns would be replaced in Blyth and Ashington. It was hoped that the hand over process would be completed in June/July this year.
- The Flood Alleviation Scheme at Morpeth continued with works being carried out in Bennett Road and Mitford Road. A scheme had also been carried out in Tyne Green, working with the community in Ovingham and the Tyne Valley. Large schemes in Hemel Burn and Amble had now been completed and consents were in place for a flood alleviation scheme to protect 137 properties in Seahouses
- Budget cuts had identified a £26 million saving for the first year, however, this had not had a huge affect on Local Services. It was hoped that there would be no reduction in front line services
- An ambitious programme had just begun on building new car parking spaces and rather than money being borrowed, some car parking charges had been introduced
- The cost of the recovery of event charges was being reviewed and additional funding would be put into the Community Chest. NCC would work with NALC to look at the eligibility. The costs of Remembrance Events would continue to be taken up by NCC
- Savings had been identified for public toilets in 2019/20. Capital investment was needed and collaborative discussions would be held with NALC on how to take forward

Following on from a question regarding dash cams it was advised that from 1 April this year, dash cam videos could be used in enforcement.

In response to a comment regarding logistics with waste bin routes, a problem was reported with egress out of a cul de sac at Mitford Gardens, Stakeford, NE62 5YR.

Mr S Rickitt requested a formal response to an email sent to the Head of Neighbourhood Services.

With the agreement of the group, agenda items 6 and 7 were brought forward.

19. Update on North of Tyne Devolution

P Johnston, Executive Director of Place provided an update on the North of Tyne Devolution.

The Combined Authority was now set up and operational with Cabinet and Communications being established. The role of the Combined Authority would be to facilitate and convene economic growth. Delivery regional activity would be the responsibility of individual authorities.

The Combined Authority had published its vision which could be accessed online and an interim Mayor had been appointed until elections in May this year.

£20 million per annum would be received from the Government to stimulate economic growth and the first tranche of money would be provided very soon. This would be used to attract investments and maximise investment opportunities across the area. A number of 'pots' had been identified - Inward Investment Pot and a Rural Growth Pot, which was hoped would stimulate rural economies. Money would also be available for business case development to stimulate and support new ideas coming forward and open up more funding opportunities, eg, Transforming Cities Funding which would stimulate and invest in more challenging high streets across the county.

The next steps - work had been ongoing to identify and deliver schemes and engagement was planned with stakeholders to explore national funding opportunities. Some priority schemes had already been identified and the need to engage in order to identify projects with future prosperity.

The following queries/comments were raised:-

- The online version of the Combined Authority's Vision was not easy to download and a user friendly version was requested
- What was the date of Purdah for the North of Tyne Authority? It was stated that a common date for this would be agreed

20. Update on Borderlands Initiative

Janice Rose, Head of Economic and Regeneration provided an update on the Borderlands Initiative.

The Borderlands Deal was submitted to Government in September last year. Some delays with the bid had taken place due to Brexit and it was now anticipated that progress would be made over the next couple of months. The Council had been given assurance that the Borderlands Deal was next in line. It was hoped that a further update would be brought back to the next meeting on the scope of the programmes.

21. Local Plan Update

Joan Sanderson, Senior Planning Manager (Planning Policy) provided an update on the progress of the Local Plan as follows:-

Regulation 18 Local Plan Consultation

Following the Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation in the summer of 2018, the Council had been working on the preparation of the Publication Draft Plan. This had been approved at Council on 9 January 2019 and was being consulted upon under Regulation 19 and this was the final opportunity for representations to be made before the Local Plan was submitted for Examination.

The Regulation 19 stage commenced on 30 January 2019 and ends at 5pm on 13 March 2019. Parish and Town Councils should have already received notification of this as well as their copy of the Publication Draft Local Plan.

This was a formal, statutory stage and was different to previous consultation. The purpose of this stage was to obtain views on the 'soundness' of the plan, whether it was positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with the NPPF. Guidance had already been sent to Parish and Town Councils and was available online.

During the consultation, 23 drop in events would be held across Northumberland where staff from the Planning Policy Team would be available to discuss the Local Plan and advise on how to submit representations. Presentations would also be made to the Local Area Councils during February, to which Parish and Town Councils would be invited to attend. Invitation via email had been sent out that morning from Democratic Services.

In addition to the Local Plan, consultation was also taking place on scoping documents for two Supplementary Planning Documents - a Design Guide for Northumberland and a Highways and Transportation Design and Delivery document, which together would provide developers, landowners and applicants with holistic design principles, guidance and good practice.

Next Steps:

- Following the end of the representation period, there would be a period of collation of the representations received and consideration of the issues raised
- The Council would need to identify the key issues and consider whether any modifications were required to the Plan, to accompany the submission of the Local Plan

In response to a query regarding the housing allocation for Pegswood, it was advised that Pegswood was covered by the Morpeth housing allocation in the Local Plan as this covered the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan area, which included the Pegswood Parish area. It was further advised that there was no need to allocate any new housing sites in the Local Plan for the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan area as there was more than enough housing sites with planning permission in the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan area to meet the housing allocation number as set out in the Local Plan.

22. Other Issues Raised

In relation to a comment regarding meeting legislative requirements, the group was informed that the Council was looking at whether current practice accorded with requirements under legislation. A recent review had highlighted inefficiencies and Parish and Town Councils would be consulted on planning applications via email. The Council hoped to work with the Parish and Town Councils to streamline communications and recognised the issues and concerns in terms of responsiveness. An email contact address would be set up for Parish and Town Councils for correspondence with NCC.