



Ashington Town Council
Town Hall
65 Station Road
Ashington Northumberland NE63 8RX
Town Clerk: Mike Slaughter
Tel: (01670) 624520 / 624521
E-mail: mikeslaughter@ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk
Website: www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk



ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 7:00pm on Tuesday 5 September 2017, at the Council Chambers, Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Victor Bridges	Marjorie Chambers
Nicola Chambers	Avril Chisholm
Matthew Cuthbert	Stephen Fenwick
Brian Gallacher	Lynne Grimshaw
Lawrence Henderson	Ken Parry (Acting Chair)
Pauline Thompson	Tom Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Slaughter – Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
Sharon Parmley – Senior Admin Officer (minute taking)
Members of the Public – 0

C17/721 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Jim Lang, Kris Lavery, Liam Lavery, Mark Purvis (Chair), Ely Turnbull and Bob Walkinshaw.

C17/722 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest from Members present.

C17/723 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on the Tuesday 4 July 2017, were agreed and signed as a true record.

C17/724 4. MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2017.

C17/725 5. LEADERS REPORT

The Leader reported on the following events and projects;

- The unveiling of the Mining Wheel Feature was planned for Friday 15 September 2017. Ian Lavery MP was to attend along with Council Members, representatives of the former National Union of Mineworker's (Northumberland Branch), Northumberland County Council (NCC) staff who were involved in the project and representatives from the contractors Brambledown Landscape Services Ltd.
- The new speed interactive speed signs were to be delivered and installed on 14 September 2017, by Morelock Signs Ltd.
- Members were informed that, together with Cllr Matthew Cuthbert and Cllr Brian Gallacher, Chair of the Neighbourhood Services Partnership, the Leader of the Council had met with the new Team Leader for the Neighbourhood Services Team in Ashington. The Leader reported that the initial meeting had been encouraging and gave grounds to believe that the service should see some real improvement in the coming weeks. The Leader reported that the next meeting of the Neighbourhood Services partnership was scheduled for 12 September.

C17/726 6. CIVIC HEAD'S REPORT

The Civic Head informed members that he has attended the following events:-

- 19 July – Northumberland CoE Academy and Armed Forces - Inaugural Annual Northumberland Engagement Dinner at the Robert Stephenson Campus
- 14 August - Opening of the refurbished Premier Convenience Store on Station Road
- 31 August - Open Evening, former Halls of Residence, College Road

C17/727 7. REGENERATION OF ASHINGTON TOWN CENTRE.

The Leader referred members to the recent press statement of the Leader of Northumberland County Council outlining the “*achievements*” of the Council in the first few months of office and setting out some early thoughts in relation to the development of Ashington.

The Leader expressed real disappointment that the press release was the only information available to the Town Council and that no real meaningful dialogue had taken place with the Town Council regarding any revised re-development plans for the Town Centre.

Members reiterated their disappointment that there was clearly now not going to be a new corporate development in Ashington and stated that early discussion was required at this critical time in the development of the town.

Resolved:

Ashington Town Council notes that:

- **The decision to scrap the development of a new County Council HQ in Ashington has led to a quantifiable waste of £2,091,649 thus far,**
- **This will be a significantly larger burden on the taxpayer when negotiations are concluded between Arch and Galliford Try,**
- **The decision to retain the existing HQ site in Morpeth will stop the redistribution of the council jobs to Ashington and puts at risk the regeneration of the town,**
- **The decision has halted a much needed catalyst in bringing further economic confidence and benefits to Ashington,**
- **No public statements on the future of Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Rail Link have been made by the new County Council since the administration changed in May 2017,**

The Council reaffirms its commitment to:

- **Working with the County Council, its development company Arch and all other partners in ensuring the best possible future for Ashington and for wider Northumberland,**
- **The belief that major public sector investment is required in order to kick start confidence, economic growth and also to attract major sustainable retail interest.**

This council calls upon Northumberland County Council to:

- **Immediately undertake an impact assessment on the decision to halt the move of jobs to the centre of Ashington on both the main street and the wider community,**
- **Use any potential alternative developments on the site to replace the number of jobs halted with an equal or greater number of people working in the town centre,**
- **Ensure any new proposals for the Portland Park site should be ‘risk assessed’ against their impact on Ashington High Street; and to**
- **Ensure local politicians and local people are involved in any new proposals at the earliest possible opportunity.**

C17/728

7. PLANNING APPLICATION – 17/02694/FUL

To provide new vehicular access off Morpeth Road to the site now occupied by Enterprise Rent-A-Car, including alteration of the existing highway and closure of the acceleration lane from A1068.

Discussions took place regarding the planning application and in particular the proposed amendments to the junction between A197 & A1068 and in particular, the proposed closure of the long-standing acceleration lane access to the A197.

Cllr.Grimshaw reported that the Bothal Divisional Ward members were fully opposed to a further vehicular access on the A197 Morpeth Road and the introduction of another “*ghost island right turn lane*” on what was becoming an extremely busy main access and entrance road into the town. Cllr.Grimshaw requested that the Town Council refute the suggestion that a further junction and access on the local road network would not have a material impact on road safety in the area.

Members were informed that resident’s responding to the application had, rightly in her view, expressed the view that a new vehicular access in such close proximity to the current road network would clearly have operational and potential safety issues.

Cllr.Grimshaw reminded members that she had raised a formal objection to the application and had also called for a full feasibility and traffic study of the A197 entrance into the town and the junction with the A1068. In addition, the Local Transport Plan also contained a long-standing request for consideration of a roundabout at the A197/A1068 junction.

The Town Clerk advised members that the development of new housing over recent years and expectation of further residential applications would clearly greatly exacerbate the current traffic difficulties. Members recognised the importance of addressing traffic issues as a priority and ensuring that changes were made that would alter the flow of traffic from the A1068, where tailbacks are also common place at key times during the day.

Resolved:

That the Town Council:

- (i) Formally object to the planning application and ask that it be not granted,**
- (ii) Object in the strongest possible terms to the additional proposal to close the acceleration lane from the main junction with the A1068,**
- (iii) Calls on Northumberland County Council to undertake a full feasibility and traffic study of the A197 road network entrance into the town and the junction with the A1068, and**
- (iv) Calls on Northumberland County Council to bring forward the longstanding Local Transport Plan scheme for the proper consideration of a roundabout at the A197/A1068 junction.**

C17/729 8. REPORTS TO REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES.

(i) Neighbourhood Services Partnership:

Cllr. Brian Gallacher reported on a recent meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Partnership;

- There had been a recognised marked improvement in services in recent weeks further to the restructuring within the NCC Neighbourhood Services Team,
- Town Council members were asked to return feedback forms as soon as possible for their evaluation of the Neighbourhood Service delivery to date in their wards,
- A request had been made that the new street cleaning machine be fully utilised every day, not only on the main street but also to the streets where there was a build up and reports of litter,
- A request had been made for the review of reporting procedures for job requests, and
- Members were invited to give early thought to the development of schemes for the Planned Works programme for October 2017-March 2018.

C17/730 9. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Full Council was scheduled for 7:00pm, Tuesday 7 November 2017, in the Council Chamber, Town Hall.

The meeting closed at 8:15pm.