

# ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 7:00pm on Tuesday, 8 September 2015, at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Station Road, Ashington.

## PRESENT:

<b>Councillors:</b>	Ely Turnbull (Chair)	Victor Bridges
	Louis Brown	Vicky Brown
	Marjorie Chambers	Avril Chisholm
	Glyn Davies	Stephen Fenwick
	Lawrence Henderson	Mark Purvis
	Wyn Stewart	Pauline Thompson

## IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Slaughter – Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer  
Stephen Humphrey – Funding & Projects Officer  
Sue Coulthard – Senior Administration Officer  
Members of the Public – 0

### **C15/570 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Les Alderson, Keith Chambers, Maggie Lang, Kris Lavery, Liam Lavery and Bob Walkinshaw.

### **C15/571 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

There were no disclosures made of personal and prejudicial interest with regard to any item on the agenda.

*At this point the Chair agreed to take Item 8 on the agenda and welcomed representatives from Nathaniel Lichfield & Partner and Intelligent Transport Planning Solutions along with the developer to the meeting – Michael Hepburn (NLP); Amer Waheed (ITPS) and Nindy Ghura (Landowner/NLP Client).*

### **C15/572 8. PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT NORTH SEATON (APPLICATION NO. 14/03715/OUT)**

The Town Clerk reminded members that presentations regarding this application had been made by Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners at two previous meetings (Full Council - September 2014; Planning & Regeneration Committee - December 2014).

The Chair invited Mr Michael Hepburn to give an update on the current situation. Mr Hepburn confirmed that as yet, Northumberland County Council (NCC) had not yet made a decision regarding the planning application but had highlighted several areas of concern to be addressed (highways issues, noise-related issues and the archaeology of the area). Mr Hepburn informed members that the two key highways issues were the access road and the pedestrian crossing.

Mr Waheed explained that travelling east, the access to the development would be via a right hand turn, but with a 35metre long "queuing" lane allowing space for up to seven cars; discussions were ongoing regarding whether the pedestrian crossing would be signalised or pelican.

Mr Hepburn explained that noise levels were being recorded at the nearby Thornton Bros work site to ascertain whether these were likely to be the cause of complaints from residents on the new development. It had also been proposed to have an area of tree planting carried out along the boundary of the development in order to baffle noise from the industrial estate. In addition, a survey had been carried out of fumes from the local paintworks and the results had shown no cause for concern.

Mr Hepburn added that it had been agreed that, before any construction work took place, more investigative work would be done regarding the archaeology of the site. Members were advised that Geophysical surveys would be undertaken which would pick up any underground workings which might affect the development.

Mr Hepburn informed members that during discussions with County Council Planning Officers, it had been identified that the site proposed for the housing development was part of an area earmarked for economic development in the Wansbeck Local Plan.

Mr Hepburn informed members of his concern that, even though support in principal had been given by NCC for the housing development proposals and there had been no economic demand for the site in recent years, NCC as the Planning Authority had now reintroduced the matter of economic use into discussions.

The Town Clerk commented that the Town Council had previously welcomed the presentations on behalf of the applicant on the basis that NCC were prepared to consider a housing application and that there was no conflict with local plans or alternative land use. The Chair

agreed with this view and stated his surprise that the position now appeared to be changing.

Mr Hepburn replied that the full application had now been submitted following the resolution of some technical issues and would be considered by the County Council at a meeting in November. Mr Hepburn thanked the Town Council for the further opportunity to attend a meeting and requested that the Town Council consider giving support to the use of the site for housing as opposed to further economic development.

The Chair thanked Messrs Hepburn, Ghura and Waheed for their presentation.

### **C15.573 3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair informed members that he had attended the following Mayoral events:-

- 13 June : Northumberland Miners' Picnic
- 15 June : Northumberland College
- 20 June : Baker's Pantry Opening
- 25 June : HMS Northumberland
- 27 June : Woodhorn Museum : Social History of Guidepost Club
- 16 July : NCC Civic Head's "At Home" Reception
- 14–19 August : Remscheid Civic Visit

### **C15/574 4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes from the meeting held on 9 June 2015 were agreed as a true record.

### **C15/575 5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

***C15/564 Ashington Workers' Memorial:*** Cllr. Chisholm reported that she had arranged meetings with staff at Kirkley Hall with regard to involving the Northumberland County Council apprentices currently employed on the Ashington Neighbourhood Services Team in this environmental project. Cllr. Chisholm stated that the meetings were to take place on 21 September and that funding would need to be made available in order for the works to be completed in due course.

## C15/576 6. LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader reported on the following issues:-

- **Tour of Britain:** The Leader reminded members that the Tour of Britain cycle race route was to take the riders through Ashington on the afternoon of Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> September.
- **Great North Run:** The Leader stated that a member of the late Cllr. Jimmy Sawyer's family was taking part in the Great North Run, raising funds for "Action for Pulmonary Fibrosis" in his memory. Any members wishing to help with the fundraising could hand their donation to Sue Coulthard after the race had been completed.
- **Ashington Neighbourhood Services Partnership:** The Leader reported that a meeting of the Board was to be arranged in the near future and members would be advised as appropriate.
- **Winter Works Programme:** The Leader reminded members that if they had any schemes they wished to be included in the winter works programme for the Neighbourhood Services Team, details needed to be forwarded to the Town Clerk as soon as possible.
- **Budget 2016-2017:** The Leader reminded members that the budget preparation process would begin very shortly. He asked that members consider what items might be covered during the next financial year. For example:-
  - Bus shelter requests
  - Residents' Survey
  - Entrance Features.
- **Remembrance Sunday (8<sup>th</sup> November) :** The Leader reminded members that, as part of the Memorial Garden Project, research had been carried out regarding Sgt. Hugh Cairns, who had been awarded the Victoria Cross and the Distinguished Conduct Medal. As a boy, Sgt. Cairns had lived in Ashington and had attended Bothal School.

The Leader stated that a number of Sgt. Cairns' family members were travelling from Canada in November and would be in Ashington over the Remembrance Weekend. The Leader suggested that the Town Council might host a civic

event during the visit. The Town Clerk added that, he had been in email correspondence the family for some 18 months; the family members had specifically asked to meet the Working Group responsible for the Memorial Garden Project, the Town Council and also the students involved in the research into Sgt. Cairns.

It was agreed that the Town Clerk be asked to look into the option of arranging an appropriate event during the Remembrance weekend to offer the opportunity to meet visiting Canadian relatives of Sgt.Cairns VC DCM.

- **Christmas Light Switch-On:** The Leader stated that, further to the successful events of the last two years, a Christmas Light Switch-On event was to be arranged in the town centre in late November 2015. The Town Clerk informed members that the Town Team had taken responsibility for the Christmas Light Switch-On event over the previous two years, albeit working in close partnership with and reliant on support from the Town Council staff. Members were informed that the Town Team had allocated an amount of £6,000 to cover the cost of the switch-on and that the Town Council also had a small budget in order to help make the event a success.

**C15/577**

## **7. TOWN TWINNING: CIVIC VISIT TO REMSCHEID (AUGUST 2015)**

The Chair reported that the civic visit to Remscheid which took place during August had been a great success. He thanked the staff for the preparatory work done in order to ensure that the arrangements were carried out smoothly and successfully. The Chair stated that the group from Ashington and Newbiggin by-the-Sea Town Councils had been warmly welcomed by Remscheid City Council and that the new Town Twinning Charter had been signed at a formal ceremony; the Chair stated it had been an honour and a privilege to represent the Town as Mayor of Ashington.

The Chair stated that he wished to personally thank the Town Clerk for his work in helping and advising him as Mayor during the visit and for formally drafting an excellent speech for him at the signing event.

Cllr. Chisholm informed members that a group of young people from Ashington who were students from Church of England Academy and Ashington High School had been involved in a schools exchange visit to Remscheid at the same time. Members were informed that the

young people had represented the town well, attending the formal event organised to sign the town twinning charter.

The Town Clerk stated that the ethos of town twinning was to encourage strong links between the communities of the partners involved and that there were currently two partnerships in the town between the high schools and schools in Remscheid.

The Town Clerk added that all partners were aware of the austerity measures currently faced by local authorities and that councils were not in a position to financially subsidise exchange activities. The Town Clerk reminded members that the Town Council had worked tirelessly since 2010 to seek to rejuvenate Town Twinning with Remscheid. Members were reminded that, at minimal cost, Ashington Town Council has already hosted in excess of six visits from Remscheid representatives.

## **C15/578 9. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

***Relocation of NCC Headquarters to Ashington:*** The Leader stated that he had received a copy of an article by Cllr. Grant Davey (NCC Leader) published in the "Inside Morpeth" newsletter. A copy of the article had been distributed to those present. The article gave background information and full reasoning for the proposal to relocate a new NCC corporate headquarters from Morpeth to Ashington.

The Town Clerk confirmed that a letter of response and support from the Leader of Ashington Town Council had been prepared and would appear in the News Post Leader. The Town Clerk added that the formal planning application regarding the proposals for town centre regeneration was currently being prepared and when submitted, would be properly considered by a meeting of the Town Council's Planning & Regeneration Committee.

## **C15/579 10. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of Full Council was scheduled for Tuesday, 3 November 2015, at 7:00pm, in the Council Chamber, at the Town Hall.

The meeting ended at 8.20pm.