

ASHINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Planning & Regeneration Committee meeting held at 6:00pm on Tuesday 16th February 2016, in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Ashington, NE63 8RX.

PRESENT:

Councillors:	Mark Purvis (Chair)	Louis Brown
	Vicky Brown	Marjorie Chambers
	Avril Chisholm	Stephen Fenwick
	Pauline Thompson	

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Slaughter – Town Clerk
Sue Coulthard – Snr. Admin. Officer
Members of the Public – 0

P&R16/107 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Les Alderson, Victor Bridges, Keith Chambers, Glyn Davies, Lawrence Henderson, Maggie Lang, Kris Lavery, Liam Lavery, Wyn Stewart, Ely Turnbull and Bob Walkinshaw

P&R16/108 2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of personal and prejudicial interest.

P&R16/109 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Planning & Regeneration Committee meeting held on 29th September 2015 were agreed and signed as a true record.

P&R16/110 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

15/104 Proposed Housing Development at North Seaton (Application No. 14/03715/OUT) : The Town Clerk confirmed that, following the meeting on 29 September 2015, the application had been considered by a meeting of the Northumberland County Council Planning Committee and had been refused.

P&R16/111 5. PEDESTRIAN/TRANSPORT PROPOSALS FOR STATION ROAD

The Town Clerk reported that Northumberland County Council (NCC) had recently carried out a public consultation exercise regarding the proposed improvements to the town centre and in particular the pedestrian/transport proposals for Station Road.

Copies of the consultation documents were circulated to those present, which gave three options for improvements to Station Road; Option 1 was for the current pedestrianised area on Station Road to be upgraded and Option 2 was improve the street cosmetically and to open it up to two-way traffic.

Members were informed that the County Council's preferred option was Option 3, which was to carry out improvements to the street, including construction of a new highway and to have traffic travelling one way only, from East to West.

The Chair reported that NCC had stated that over 200 responses had been received to date, with only three opposed to the preferred Option 3. The Chair informed members that residents responding had also commented that the problems caused by the traffic flow at the Grand Corner should be addressed at the same time as any improvements were carried out to Station Road.

The Town Clerk reported that indications were that, once approved, work to Station Road would start in April and be completed in late 2016.

During a lengthy discussion, it was agreed that Ashington Town Council supported the proposals outlined in the County Council's Preferred Option 3. Issues were raised by members regarding the following:-

- i) Relocation of the market
- ii) Relocation of the taxi rank
- iii) Traffic management at Grand Corner
- iv) "Brightness levels" and quality of street lighting
- v) Criteria for any proposed shop front improvement scheme

The Town Clerk confirmed that clarification was needed regarding the relocation of the market and the taxi rank but added that the dialogue was ongoing via the Arch Stakeholder Group. Members

were informed that preliminary discussions had taken place between the NCC representatives and the Town Team concerning the likely funding and criteria for a shop front improvement scheme which would likely be jointly managed by both parties. Members were reminded that the Town Council was represented at meetings of both the Stakeholder Group and the Town Team and worked closely with both groups.

Resolved:

That the Town Clerk respond to Northumberland County Council in support of the preferred Option 3 for the Station Road improvements, further seeking clarification regarding the following matters:-

- i) Relocation of the weekly market,**
- ii) Relocation of the taxi rank/s; and**
- iii) Proposals for traffic management at Grand Corner**

P&R16/112 6. PROPOSED NEW COUNTY HALL HQ SITE – LINTONVILLE TERRACE, ASHINGTON (PLANNING APP. 15/04301/FULES)

The Town Clerk reported that Northumberland County Council would be considering the funding provision within its proposed budget for this project at a meeting to be held on 24 February 2016. Members were informed that, subject to a positive outcome at that meeting, the County Council would consider the planning application for the proposed new County Hall HQ Site at a meeting of its Planning Committee during the first week of April 2016.

The Chair reminded members that the Town Council had previously given its full support to this proposal and welcomed the fact that a decision was now imminent. It was agreed that, subject to the approval of the budget and the planning application, the Town Clerk produce an early newsletter informing all residents of the proposals and plans.

P&R16/113 7. WANSBECK ROAD – PROPOSED “NO WAITING RESTRICTIONS”, PROPOSED “RESIDENT PARKING ZONE” AND EXTENSION OF SCHOOL KEEP CLEAR MARKINGS

The Town Clerk reported that, as part of a public consultation exercise, Ashington Town Council had been asked by Northumberland County Council to respond to the consultation process regarding the traffic management proposals on Wansbeck Road; copies of the consultation documents had been circulated to members of the Committee.

The Town Clerk explained that the residents on Wansbeck Road had for some time, raised concerns about indiscriminate parking during school times resulting in poor visibility at junctions and difficulty in maintaining a flow of traffic. Members were reminded that the County Council was proposing to introduce a “No Waiting At Any Time” restriction on Wansbeck Road and at the junctions with surrounding streets.

The Town Clerk reported that in addition, the County Council was proposing to introduce a “Resident Parking Zone” and the extension of the “School Keep Clear” markings on Wansbeck Road which if introduced, would result in residents being issued with 2 permits per household at a cost of £15 per year.

In response to comments from members, the Town Clerk confirmed that letters to consultees and residents affected by the proposals had been sent out by the County Council during the previous week.

Although members were aware that there was a problem being caused on Wansbeck Road, particularly at school drop off and pick up times and fully understood the proposals, there was a general concern that the introduction of the proposals may result in the problem moving elsewhere; i.e. into the back streets and the surrounding area.

Resolved:

That the Town Clerk be asked to respond to Northumberland County Council’s public consultation exercise outlining Town Council support for the proposals.

P&R16/114 7. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There were no other items of urgent business.

P&R16/115 7. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

To be agreed.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm.