

TOWN COUNCIL 13 FEBRUARY 2013**1. Power Station and Lagoons**

- 1.1 Following the announcement of the transfer of the power station by Rio Tinto Alcan to RWE npower the Vice-Chairperson and the Town Clerk met with the new owners and arranged to host an introductory meeting between them and the Town Council and representatives of the regulating agencies the Environment Agency and Northumberland County Planning.
- 1.2 Lynemouth Power Limited, the new company created to operate the power station, were represented by the Managing Director; Works Director; Power Station Chemist along with the Regional Economic Development Director from RTA at the meeting held in Newbiggin by-the-Sea Maritime Centre on 30 January.
- 1.3 The Managing Director outlined great aspirations for Lynemouth Power and intended regular discussions with local parties. They were pleased to have continued employment for 125 staff transferred from RTA and had 30 contractors on site. Medium and long-term plans were being developed involving accelerated biomass with unit 1 being converted and operating by the end of the year and completion of the other units by 2015.
- 1.4 Two apprentices will be appointed this year followed by graduates for technical aspects with training and development on biomass conversion. The initial business plan covers the first five years then is to extend to twenty years for the challenging project to convert the whole plant to biomass burn with extensive environmental controls through the Environment Agency
- 1.5 Within the terms of the existing consent the initial trial would see shipment of biomass by road moving progressively to 100% rail transport following conversion of the rail point. The fully sustainable wood pellet biomass will be shipped through the Port of Tyne and the parent company owns a pellet producing plant. Road shipments will vary up to 2015 during the period of transition from coal to biomass burning. On a much smaller scale the ash by-product from the biomass would be used for fertiliser.
- 1.6 The lagoons remain a licensed operational landfill site until the coal burning ends in 2015 for the deposit of ash. While an option for some ash needed to be retained it was unlikely that the No. 1 and 2 lagoons would be needed. The whole area remains subject to monitoring by the Environment Agency and subject to stringent license conditions until it can be surrendered to its satisfaction. Reference was also made to the planning conditions in force for restoration of the area.
- 1.7 Members discussed the need to be involved in the process that would see a transitional surrender of large areas of operational land and the re-introduction of alternative uses over time. It was agreed that a restoration plan needed to be

developed and discussions will take place with the Planning Authority and the Environment Agency to satisfy the conditions.

- 1.8 It was recognised that this process should not wait until the end of the biomass conversion process but that timescales for surrender could be laid down in anticipation of surrender. Lynemouth Power and RTA accepted a positive approach to consultation by a new but responsible owner with the inclusion of the Town Council to develop a plan that would be implemented over a number of years.

RECOMMENDED: that the inclusion of the Town Council in the planning of the likely phased restoration of the lagoon land be welcomed.

2. **Northumberland Core Strategy Consultation**

- 2.1 The latest stage of consultation on the Northumberland Core Strategy commenced on 06 February and will last only until 20 March because of the election timetable. A series of drop-in and themed workshop discussions will be held at various venues as shown in Appendix 1.

- 2.2 The Core Strategy Preferred Options document is a substantial publication running to 194 pages intended to become the overarching spatial plan for the county to guide future planning decisions. This is available online at www.northumberland.gov.uk/corestrategy and at all libraries and designated offices.

- 2.3 It raises some sixty questions across a range of topics seeking to identify preferred policies and options across housing; economy; town centres and retail; green belt; minerals; waste; renewable and low carbon energy; sustainable construction and small-scale renewable energy; transportation; information and communications technologies; community facilities; natural and historic environment; water environment

- 2.4 The aims of the county strategy are:

- Making climate change work to our advantage;
- Maintaining and creating sustainable communities;
- Rebalancing our economy;
- Giving everyone a voice and influence;
- Providing healthy lifestyle choice;
- Supporting our young people into adulthood;
- Delivering services differently.

- 2.5 The Vision that will underpin the Core Strategy is:

By 2030 Northumberland's diverse communities will be healthy and resilient and set within a diverse and strong economy. The County's significant resources will be

utilised in a sustainable way and the unique and varied qualities of the natural, historic and built environment will be protected and enhanced

- 2.6 There are eight objectives to form the basis for delivering the vision:
- **Objective 1:** To place sustainable development and responsible future economic growth at the heart of planning decisions in Northumberland;
 - **Objective 2:** To meet Northumberland's objectively assessed development needs and demands including: new homes, employment space, health and community services, and infrastructure;
 - **Objective 3:** To maintain and create sustainable communities throughout Northumberland to support health, social and cultural well-being for all including responding to the needs and opportunities created by an ageing population;
 - **Objective 4:** To facilitate investment which stimulates employment opportunities and supports job retention in a resilient and strong Northumberland economy;
 - **Objective 5:** To make Northumberland resilient to climate change and contribute to mitigating against its effects, whilst also creating sustainable job opportunities in green industries;
 - **Objective 6:** To protect and enhance Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic and built environment;
 - **Objective 7:** To manage the prudent use of Northumberland's natural resources, including minerals, energy, land, existing built fabric and water while producing less waste and minimising adverse impacts on communities and the environment;
 - **Objective 8:** To ensure all development makes best use of, and safeguards, Northumberland's infrastructure securing necessary up-grades and promotes sustainable modes of transport where appropriate.
- 2.7 Overall the approach of the plan is to allow sustainable development; plan for increases in building to allow growth to boost the economy and bring regeneration.
- 2.8 For the south-east Northumberland delivery area it recognises that Newbiggin by-the-Sea performs an important role as a service centre. The principle issues to be tackled are to realise proposed growth at Ashington and Blyth; tackling deprivation; pressure for coal extraction; reverse the decline in public transport; strategic employment sites.

RECOMMENDED: that the Town Council consider any issues to be raised in response to the consultation.

3. Community Governance Review

- 3.1 I can confirm receipt of the Order made by Northumberland County Council following the conclusion of the Community Governance Review for the Parish of Newbiggin by-the-Sea.
- 3.2 The Northumberland (Reorganisation of Community Governance)(Parish of Newbiggin by the Sea) Order 2013 was made and sealed on 15th January 2013 under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and comes into force on the ordinary day of election of Councillors this year.
- 3.3 The existing wards of the parish have been abolished and four wards created as shown on the map each to be represented by two Councillors.
- 3.4 The map indicating the boundaries of the wards is attached and a new Register of Electors has been requested from the County Council.

4. Local Service Agreements

- 4.1 Updates have previously been given on developments regarding Local Service Transfer from the County Council and the further delay of detailed consideration for parks and playing fields with very late decisions made during the budget consultation process.
- 4.2 Some progress is being made with the transfer of the playgrounds and notice has been given to terminate the agency basis and seek actual transfer of the assets by the end of March. Some of this may be achieved but some may not owing to capacity issues.
- 4.3 Revised prices for the work concerning current services for play areas; bus shelters; public seats; litter bins had been provided during the budget considerations by county officers are at an acceptable level. As there is still uncertainty over the extent of services and packaging of a suitable contract it is suggested that the County Council be again engaged to carry out the work in 2013-14.

RECOMMENDED that the Town Clerk be authorized to complete appropriate agreements with County Neighbourhood Services for 2013-14.

5. Temporary Car Park Facility

- 5.1 As reported to the Finance Committee arrangements for an overflow temporary car park had been investigated and the site owned by the county council was suitable following ground condition surveys.
- 5.2 It has been accepted that the overall cost of the scheme was too high for the Town Council alone and would have to be pursued jointly with the County

Councillor and the Portas Project as an infrastructure scheme for the regeneration of the town.

- 5.3 A scheme budget of £21,700 is required and County Councillor Thompson has agreed to provide an allocation of £11,000 from his County Councillor Local Schemes budget but the funding presently available to the Portas Project may be fully committed.
- 5.4 A balance of £10,700 is required to implement this scheme and the Town Council is invited to consider whether it can meet that contribution from balances in the current year.

RECOMMENDED: that a contribution from balances be considered.

<p>Informal drop-in 10.30am to 8.00pm at</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday 12th February. Blyth – Blyth Community Enterprise Centre, Quayside, NE24 3AG. • Tuesday 19th February. Morpeth – Town Hall, Market Place, NE61 1LZ. • Wednesday 20th February. Alnwick – St James's Centre, Pottergate NE66 1JW. • Thursday 21st February. Haltwhistle – The Library, Westgate, NE49 0AX. • Wednesday 27th February. Ashington – Hirst Welfare Centre, Alexandra Road, NE63 9HN. • Thursday 28th February. Berwickupon-Tweed – The William Elder Building, 56 - 58 Castlegate, TD15 1JT. • Thursday 7th March. Hexham – Hexham Auction Mart, Tyne Green, NE46 3SG. 	<p>Workshop discussions 11.00am to 1.00pm and again 6.00pm to 8.00pm at each of the drop-in sessions.</p> <p>Themed workshops at Choppington Social Welfare Centre, Colliery Road, Choppington, NE62 5SS, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewable Energy Monday 11th March, 10.00am to 2.00pm • Sustainable Communities Monday 11th March, 2.00pm to 4.00pm • The Natural and Historic Environment Friday 15th March, 10.00am to 12.00pm <p>Please register in advance for these events through the contacts below.</p>
<p>How to view and comment View and submit comments online at www.northumberland.gov.uk/corestrategy</p> <p>Paper copies available at all libraries and planning offices at County Hall, Morpeth; Allerburn House, Alnwick; Hadrian House, Hexham.</p> <p>Email: PlanningStrategy@northumberland.gov.uk</p> <p>Address: Spatial Policy and Delivery, Development Services, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF</p> <p>Phone: 0845 600 6400.</p>	<p>Future consultations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer 2013: Green Belt, housing and economy issues • Autumn 2013: Draft Plan • Spring 2014: Plan for submission to the Government.