

COUNCIL 08 SEPTEMBER 2010**1. Local Transport Plan (LTP) Northumberland County Council Integrated Transport Programme 2011/12**

- 1.1 The county council is developing a new Local Transport Plan and has invited the Town Council to submit its top three priorities for assessment for inclusion in next years' Integrated Transport Programme.
- 1.2 This programme excludes road and footway maintenance and cannot be used for public transport services which are funded separately. NCC has pointed out that funding is likely to be significantly less than at present.
- 1.3 NCC current transport policy is to promote sustainable travel by walking cycling and public transport and to reduce car use so car related schemes such as new car parks are unlikely to be successful. This fits well with the Town council's decision at the last meeting to press for a better safer footpath/cycle track adjacent to Spital Farm at the entrance to the town in the interests of child safety in particular.
- 1.4 A list of previous requests for local schemes is attached at Appendix 1 for information.

RECOMMENDED: that the Town Council identify its top three priority schemes to submit for inclusion in the Integrated Transport Programme 2011/12.

2. Northumberland County Council Consultation Tree and Woodland Strategy

- 2.1 The county council has recently published its final draft of the Tree and Woodland Strategy for the county and is consulting the Town and Parish Councils to seek any comments and suggestions regarding its content.
- 2.2 The document has been circulated to members and covers the importance value and management of trees on council owned land.
- 2.3 The priority objectives of the policy are:
 - to create a cleaner greener safer county
 - maintain current good tree care practice, while taking opportunities to improve where possible
 - enhance the woodland, rural and urban areas within Northumberland
- 2.4 A wide range of policy issues are covered including tree related benefits and problems; green infrastructure and biodiversity; general, highway, parks and open spaces and woodland tree management.

RECOMMENDED: that members consider the Tree and Woodland Strategy and whether any comments or suggestions need to be made to the county council.

3 Proposals for Referendum regarding increases in local taxation

- 3.1 The government is proposing to replace capping powers with local referendums to veto 'excessive increases' in local taxation following the coalition promise to give residents the power to veto high council tax rises.
- 3.2 A short technical consultation commenced on 30 July but the Department of Communities and Local Government did not notify Town and Parish Councils despite the intention to include the new power for precepts levied by them. Any comments must be submitted by 10 September and the Department will not extend this in view of their tight parliamentary timetable to legislate for the next budget round.
- 3.3 Legislation will be designed to give the Secretary of State power to determine a principle based on a comparison of the authority's level of council tax with the level in the previous year. This will probably result in an arbitrary percentage being applied but details will not be available until around the time that the budget is being set and a de minimis exception will be applied to protect small parish councils.
- 3.4 The new scheme will require any authority intending to exceed the limits prescribed by the Secretary of State to prepare a parallel budget and arrange a local referendum. In the case of Town and Parish Councils this will be undertaken by the county council and the cost recharged. Should the local electorate reject the increase then it has to be refunded or deducted from the following year's precept.
- 3.5 In principle there is nothing wrong in placing limitations on increases in council tax and precepts but these arrangements seem to be at odds with the governments stated intention of devolving decision-making to the lowest appropriate level. The arrangement to transfer local service delivery from the county council is just getting underway and most of this will be without the transfer of funding. The transfer of those services subject to the special charge levied by the county council this year alone could trigger the need for a referendum the cost of which is out of proportion to the cost of the service.
- 3.6 This authority and those others newly created in Northumberland will be distinctly disadvantaged by these proposals as a realistic service delivery level for the Town Council has not yet been established and the current precept contains little of what the Charter for Local Services envisages.

RECOMMENDED that the Town Council:

- (i) consider its response to the governments' proposals;**
- (ii) agree that a special case should be made for newly created local councils.**

4 Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC)

- 4.1 The Northumberland Association has confirmed changes to its constitution to elect a new County Committee using the county council Locality Areas providing 9 representatives in each of the north, west and south-east geographical areas of the county plus 3 for Newcastle parishes.

- 4.2 In many areas parishes have been grouped together with each able to nominate and elections held if more than one is nominated. Newbiggin is allocated one seat in common with the other larger local councils and their nominee will be appointed at the Annual General Meeting.
- 4.3 NALC seeks commitment from nominees able and willing to co-operate and communicate with the wider local councils' sector. Key duties include:
- reflect the views and interests of local councils
 - network with local councils within the area and act as a two-way conduit with the NALC County Committee, both through face-to-face contact and via ICT
 - contribute constructively to the work of NALC and its partners
 - participation in meetings of NALC's County Committee.
- 4.4 The Annual General Meeting of NALC is to be held on Saturday 23 October 2010 at 10 am to appoint officers and the committee, consider the annual report and audited accounts and agreement of subscriptions for 2011-12 but can also debate issues raised by member-councils and will have a guest speaker.
- 4.5 The Town Council can send two delegates entitled to vote and others can attend in a non-voting capacity.

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) a nomination be submitted for the County Committee;**
- (ii) two members be delegated to vote at the AGM.**

Appendix 1

Request	Location	
Footway	Sandy Bay entrance to Newbiggin	
Footway	Corner of Argyle Terrace and Long Park to the Sports Centre	
Surface existing path	Path connecting Moor Estate, Sea Crest and East Lea to Moorside First School	
Installation of Bus Shelter	Outside Keir Hardy Court, Woodlee Estate	
Replacement of two Bus Shelters	Woodhorn Crescent, Woodhorn Road (Newbiggin Colliery)	
Installation of Bus Shelter	Adjacent to Bank House Car Park, Front Street	
Installation of Bus Shelter	Bottom of Seacrest Road	
Street Lighting	North Seaton roundabout to Newbiggin	
Action to reduce traffic speeds	Whitehouse Corner area, Front Street	
Traffic Calming Measures	Collingwood Road (to Woodhorn Road)	
20 mph Zone	Spital Estate	
Traffic Calming	Church Point and Front Street	
Traffic Calming	Collingwood Road and King Georges Road	
20 mph Zone and one way system	Spital Estate	
Traffic Calming/road markings	Manor Court/Manor Drive	
Traffic Calming Measures	Latimer Way	
One-Way system	Windsor Road area	
Residents permit parking on the street	Vernon Place	