

NOTES FOR UPDATE FOR BIRTLEY PC MEETING 20-5-25

- 1) **Local Area Committees.** Last full council meeting, one of the matters we voted on was changing the number of planning committees from 5 to 3. This was because apparently there were some LACs that weren't receiving many applications and some LACs being inundated. The new 3 LACs will hopefully balance out the workload. Due to proportionality Both myself and Martin (Green party Leader in Northumberland) have both been told we will be on a LAC. This will hopefully give the Humshaugh ward a good insight as to what is happening with planning applications. It will mean I will be able to speak on and support certain applications .

- 2) **Grass verge and Main road.** I contacted Members enquiry on the grass verges and the main road you mentioned last time and this was the response I got:

In relation to the grass cutting on the road between Birtley and Wark, we cut rural grass verges once annually between early June and late July, this is carried out by local contractors using a tractor and side flail. The amount of the verge that can be cut can sometimes be limited by how wide the verge is as the flail machine requires about 40-50cm on its outer side to take account of the casing and mechanism of the flail. So verges that are narrow or have an adjacent hedge or wall can be difficult to service. Any areas where there are a problem with site lines can be reported and we'll prioritise them and address them as soon as resources allow, deploying staff with strimmer's if needs be. Our Neighbourhoods Senior Team Leader will check the area to see if any further action is required.

The main road through Birtley Village (C213) is subject to a 6 monthly driven statutory safety inspection in line with NCC Policy for highway inspections.

Any defect(s) identified during a routine safety inspection or from a 3rd party complaint which meets the NCC Policy intervention levels, will have a job raised for repairs and those repairs will be completed within the NCC Policy timescales which are determined by the road hierarchy.

I have emailed them back to see if anyone has been to inspect the grass verges. I have also asked where they are on the inspection of the road. I am waiting to hear back a response.

- 3) **The LTP.** Soon NCC will be sending out a letter to ask all PC to include suggestions to put forward to the Local Transport plan. I will also have 3 suggestions but these cover the whole ward which include 8 PCs. I had emailed NCC about a query that the Chair at Chollerton PC had which was that if PC and myself put forward the same suggestion to the LTP, this would give it more priority. I am not saying that this is the way we should do this but I just wanted to let you know so you can be aware of this option. The Councillor who has taken over as the new portfolio holder for Highways is Councillor Mark Mather. He has already suggested some improvements to the LTP, this being, make the LTP a 3 year programme rather than just a year. Councillor Mather believes that this is a good idea for the following reasons:

- Greater certainty for stakeholders over what is being delivered and when , and with more of the priorities submitted making it into the overall programme
- More time to undertake member and community engagement over schemes, design amendments & feedback, to ensure we get the best possible design solutions to address the issues being raised
- Improved cost efficiency and VFM from our capital funding
- More effective programming of works and management of supply chains
- Improved operational performance and reduced disruption to highway network users

This won't be going through till next year in April, but only if it is approved by March next year. Formal reviews of this new approach will be taken after year 1 and 2 by Councillors so if you do have any concerns if these goes through, then I would appreciate the feedback.