

## Local Council Liaison Group - 01 02 2018

## Issues

- **Actions from Conference.** Janice Rose referenced the list of items 'captured' from the conference.
- Glen Sanderson speaking on **parking issues** 'we will not impose anything on local towns.'
- Glen Sanderson indicated an extra £200k will be spent on **gulley cleaning** and that the county councillors now prepare lists of priorities regarding **potholes** in their areas. Peter Jackson stated that rather than filling potholes the intention is to patch wherever possible.
- Peter Jackson stated that an extra £500k has been allocated to **salt spreading**.
- Paul Jones points
  - Last year additional **verge cutting** completed by the end of July – some complaints from interest groups about loss of habitat. This is now accepted as the county standard.
  - **Waste on highways** is of concern and a Feb/March litter picking programme is part of the annual cycle.
  - **Weed control**, the area of highest complaint, issues down to inconsistent performance by sub-contractors; the intention is to do more in house. A non toxic blue dye will be incorporated in spray to reduce of missed areas.
  - **Street lighting**, major problems caused by main contractor going under. Glen Sanderson stated that they have beefed up the first line response for complaints.
    - Questions highlighted the problems in getting **Northern Power** to provide new connections.
  - David Francis asked if **burial grounds** being run by local councils will continue to receive a grant from NCC. Paul Jones said he understood the double charging issue and a review of costs of NCC run facilities is taking place if this shows that the NCC run facilities are breaking even then the double charging issues will no longer be relevant., suggesting that in these circumstances the grant will be discontinued?

- **Dog mess.** Glen Sanderson mentioned that a pilot of dog bag dispensers was being undertaken in Newbiggin by the Sea where there is a particular problem.

An extended conversation took place on dog mess – a view was expressed that this was being caused by ‘townies.’ The option of purchasing extra enforcement was discussed (£36,000 annual cost equating to £700/per week).

- **NCC Medium Term Financial Plan** presented by Peter Jackson

#### Headlines

- 65 million inherited pressures
- 1.5 billion potential debt
- Increased service demand
- Operating principles
  - Financial prudence
  - Resourceful
  - Listening and considering
  - Empowering
  - Collaborative
- Approach
  - Service integration
  - New ways of working
  - Income generation
- Enjoyment of life
- Connecting – infrastructure (rail, road and IT)
- Learning. NCC is not performing well (in the bottom quartile). In part to be addressed by the Combined Authority’s educational challenge.
- Thriving.
- Budget

- Inherited position with 4.48 million of prior years savings that have not been achieved.
- National Government have allowed a 2.99% rise in Council tax plus other measures such as 20% increase in planning fees.
- Not a national government problem rather a problem of where we are in relation to repayments of loans re capital expenditure.
- 19.62 million savings with additional savings through renegotiated contracts.
- Most ambitious capital programme of 202 million:
  - Schools (132,7m)
  - Newcastle – Northumberland Rail (94.2m)
  - Highways (68,3m)
  - Housing (35.7M)
  - Fleet (28m)
  - Leisure (22.8m) ‘sorting out the mess that was Active Northumberland.’
  - County Hall (17m)
  - Car Parks (10m)

### Questions

- Alex Wallace asked about a Leisure Centre for Bedlington. PJ responded that the main priority for Bedlington will be the town centre development.
- On the question of transfer of services Peter Jackson stated that there will be individual discussions with every affected local council over the next few months.
- **Review of Local Council** election will be an agenda item for the next meeting. Alex Wallace suggested that parishes might have to make a contribution towards having local counts.

- **North of Tyne Devolution:**

- The deal has been developed without falling out with the other 4 authorities who are part of NECA. For the deal to go ahead all 7 authorities will have to agree to the creation of the North of Tyne Combined Authority.
- Focus on delivering outcomes to support North East Strategic Economic Plan.
- Deal announced 24 November 2017.
- No Mayor, no devolution.
- Mayor is embedded in the cabinet model composed of mayor and leader and deputy leader of each member authority.
- A consensual model.
- An increased role for business.
- Investment fund of 30 million per annum with Northumberland getting a share of 20 million
- Expectation that focus will be on growth opportunities in energy, culture/visitor economy and life sciences and giving residents access to employment.
- Education Improvement Challenge.
- Devolution of Adult Education Budget from 2019/20 – 23m per annum.
- Institute of Technology business case development.
- Work with Government to adopt an Employment Support Framework agreement, to align NT and DWP/health programmes.
- Government support for a series of pilot projects to tackle barriers to employment.
- Housing:
  - New powers to accelerate delivery of new homes and to support delivery on strategic sites led by new Housing and Land Board.
  - Commitment to work towards Housing Growth Deal for North of Tyne over coming months.

- Digital connectivity.
- Great Exhibition of the North
- NT Rural Productivity Plan and Rural Scale up Champion for England.
- Transport not as big a feature as other 'deals' because of reality of NEXUS et al.
- This is deal number one and experience suggests that major benefit comes from subsequent deals.
- Consultation across the NECA area to determine if the proposed meets the strategic thresholds.
- The new authority will not have precept raising powers, but the Mayor will (up to 2% on business rates and through a precept for the Mayors' office). To date no mayor has raised a precept.