

**St Mary's Ward
Community Conversation
Thursday 5th December 2013**

Present: Cllr Ed Hodson (Chair), Cllr Judith Wallace, Cllr Pam McIntyre, Cait Foley - NTC, Felicity Shoemsmith-NTC, Ian Whitfield – Capita, Steven Harvey – Capita, Andrew Burnett – Capita, Steve Robson- Northumbrian Water, Laura Hewitt – Capita and 16 residents.

2. Welcome Housekeeping and Community Conversations

Cllr Hodson opened the meeting explaining that this was a new way of carrying out community engagement that will take place at least three times a year in the St Mary's ward. In addition the Elected Mayor will be undertaking listening sessions. These are open to all residents and will move around North Tyneside, so take place in the St Mary's Ward once every 20 months.

3. Flooding Response

Ian Whitfield from Capita gave a short presentation on the work that is on going to help prevent flooding to residents' homes. In addition Steve Robson from Northumbrian Water was present to explain about some of the work they are involved in aimed at reducing the risk of flooding to residential properties.

In Gerrard Close work has taken place at the Golf course to reduce run off. In Astley Drive, there has been an issue with the culvert; this has been cleared out at the west end and some repairs including new piping to support the culvert walls and a new grill have been installed. This area will receive on going active monitoring.

In Nelson Road, through Wellfield there is a problem with the water that is coming from the Shiremoor area which travels through a very narrow culvert. The engineers have been working on a large scheme that will address issues in both Shiremoor and Wellfield.

The Chair then asked for people to comment on what they had heard or ask any question they had. (Q – question, C – comment, R – response)

C. This is causing a problem within Brierdene the east end also needs to be cleaned out.

R. Yes both the east and west end will be repaired.

Q. Is the culvert that comes down Nelson Road clear as there had been an issue following the building works there?

R. The culvert has been surveyed which highlighted a minor obstruction. This obstruction has since been removed.

Q. Is there a plan to increase the capacity of this culvert?

R. Increasing the capacity of the culvert is an option that is being considered by the engineers. Other options which look at reducing the flow before it enters the Nelson Road culvert are also being investigated.

C. Seatonville Road was affected by flooding on the 28th June. There were no houses flooded, but this is a main road and this site is being developed.

R. There are two culverts – one from the Otterburn Avenue area which will be addressed as part of the Murton Scheme and also the Nelson Road culvert. The developers are carrying out highway improvement works which will also address the drainage of the highway.

Q. What are you doing in Hillsden Road?

R. (Northumbrian Water) We have identified some issues and currently have consultants looking at this to come up with the best solution. We expect to have a report from the consultants in March which should identify what action is needed

Steve Robson from Northumbrian Water also gave some detail on the work they are doing in the ward. In Gerrard Road they have identified some funding that will be used to do these improvements. Willoughby Drive is with consultants to decide on a course of action but there have been some problems with grout in the system and this has been cleaned out. Woodburn Drive had a 90% blockage with grout – this has been cleared. Also Northumbrian Water are looking at what improvements can be made to Craneswater Avenue.

Cllr Hodson thanked the officers for their input and informed the meeting that the officers would be around at the end to answer any specific questions residents might have.

4. Consultation on the North Tyneside Local Plan

This is a 15 year plan that every local authority needs to have. It gives the Local Authority much more local control. The Consultation Draft plan is currently out for consultation, this includes identifying potential development sites and the policies that will help to inform future planning decisions.

Laura Hewitt gave a short presentation on the Consultation draft plan then took questions. This stage of the consultation closes on the 6th January 2014. Information has been given to all residents and full copies of the proposals are in the Libraries or available on line.

The Chair then asked for people to comment on what they had heard or ask any question they had. (Q – question, C – comment, R – response)

C. There is very little about the road system; we should be improving accessibility as there must be a better way rather than the current traffic system through Whitley Bay.

R. The plan does include ensuring that the road infrastructure could cope with any new developments.

C. The traffic through Whitley Bay would be reduced if the council made better use of the area that included the old classic cinema site, towards Boundary Mills and onto Holystone Roundabout.

C. (Cllr Hodson) Please could we ensure that this suggestion is fed into the discussion about the plan?

Q. When the plan is agreed will it be set in stone?

R. When the plan has been adopted, all decisions must be based on the plan unless material consideration overrules it. If we have a strong plan, based on evidence with robust public consultation, this strengthens local planning decisions.

C. (Cllr McIntyre) This Consultation draft plan has all potential plots identified and in the past we have not identified these as part of our planning. There is a large green space from Murton through to Monkseaton which is currently open space. If something is on the consultation plan, a developer may put forward proposals for that location and if it is not initially approved, they often win on appeal. I believe it is important to not have wall to wall housing. I think we should have space between local communities and their individual identities.

R. The sites have been identified by the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. It is all of the land we know could be developed across all of North Tyneside; not all is council owned land.

C. (Cllr Wallace) It is really important that everyone gets their comments in by the 6th January. I feel it is most unfortunate that the consultation period goes over the festive season when residents are busy with family, shopping etc and may not be aware of this consultation; time goes quickly and 6th January would arrive before people have time to see all the detail.

C. The consultation is good, but you are not directed to it from the front page of the Council website.

R. We will try to change this with the website team tomorrow. There is a link on the NTC homepage, and has been from the beginning of the consultation.

Q. How protected is the Green Belt?

R. There are no plans to develop the Green Belt during the duration of this plan.

Q. Does the plan cover brown field sites?

R. Yes, this plan includes all the known available brown field sites across the borough.

Q. What percentage of the Cobalt Business Park is occupied?

R. We don't know but will find out. A recent study (November 2013) showed that approximately 30% of units are vacant.

Q. The plan identifies development land on the north side of the River Tyne; do we have people with the right skills for these jobs?

R. We have already started to look at the training needed so that we can ensure we have local people with the necessary skills. Northumbria University has recently opened a campus in that area that trains in the skills needed in the relevant local industries.

C. The road access to the North Bank is not good.

R. This is being looked at.

Q. If you are going to build on green / brown field sites won't this increase the risk of flooding? What happens to water that is currently absorbed by these sites?

R. Building on sites that have been flooded can reduce future risk of flooding if prevention measures are included within the plans. All new plans have to consider what they can do to reduce flooding; this often includes building in ponds to hold

water and other prevention measures. Plans are reviewed by the Council / Capita to ensure that they reduce the risk of flooding both in the new developments as well as the surrounding area. In addition, Northumbrian Water will work to ensure that there is capacity within the drainage systems. All this is checked before planning permission is given.

Q. The plan identified the potential for up to 12,000 new houses, but what about schools, parking, hospitals, GP's and other services?

R. The plan does include the need to consider the range of infrastructure required to support an increase in housing. These are all areas that are considered as part of agreeing any development and where more is needed this can be included within the development requirement.

Q. What is happening to the cliff along by the mini golf course and the Brierdene car park?

R. The plan does include the recommendations of the Northumberland Coast Shoreline Management Plan. There are plans to do some work on the northern corner of the beach by the light house. This will include a new wall which will be about 100m. This should take place next year and should help to stabilise the cliff.

Q. Are there any external grants available for the protection of the whole cliff?

R. We do keep a close eye on grant opportunities, but at present there is nothing.

Q. Has there not been an issue with DEFRA looking after the cliff?

R. (Cllr Hodson) There has been a change of focus at DEFRA and this is now something they are responsible for.

Cllr Hodson thanked everyone for attending and then formally closed the meeting.