

Acomb Parish Council – District Councillor’s Report March 2008

As you will see from the agenda, one of the items under discussion at the March Parish Council meeting is a possible site for additional affordable housing in the village, using the land currently occupied by garages between Millersfield and Chapel Close.

You will remember last August, when we considered the Local Development Plan site allocations, that Tynedale Council’s Housing Department had identified a need for an additional 28 affordable homes in Acomb over the next five years. In August 2007, there were 53 households in housing need with a local connection to Acomb. I have checked with the council this week, and this situation has not changed. There is clearly still a need, but it is also important that there is general support for any scheme seeking to address the issue.

Earlier this month I attended a briefing session on the Local Area Agreement for Northumberland, which describes itself as “a sustainable community strategy to 2021”, spearheaded by the Northumberland Strategic Partnership. For the first time, on a wide range of public services have a legal duty to co-operate in partnership work to work towards the following outcomes:

- to increase economic growth to match the equivalent regional level of growth
- to sustain individual welfare and well being (life expectancy at birth) at above the national average
- to reduce impact on the environment (i.e. carbon footprint) to match the regional average
- to reduce the level of deprivation to match the national average ranking

The preparation for the new unitary authority for Northumberland continues, with the publication of The Whole Council Blueprint Design (available by ringing 01670 533308 or at <http://www2.northumberland.gov.uk/reports/ofoc/docs/blueprint-summary.pdf>). It poses a number of questions, including for example which services should be delegated to Belonging Communities. Although comments can be made at any time, initial views are invited by March 7th.

As most people will know, I am a governor at Hexham Middle School. Hexham Middle School and Queen Elizabeth High School are consulting on the formation of a hard federation between the 2 schools, which would remain separate, but have one governing body. Copies of the consultation documents are obtainable from both schools or at <http://www.qehs.net/content/view/125/>. In addition to meetings for parents, there will also be a public meeting on Thursday March 6th at 7pm at Hexham Middle School. Consultation continues until April 21st and if the governors decide to proceed, federation will be effective from September 2008.

Lastly, for those of us living in Acomb village, the new garden waste recycling scheme begins this month, with the delivery of the brown bins on March 10th and collection starting on April 7th. If you need further advice or information, please ring Customer Services on 01434 652151 or email customer.services@tynedale.gov.uk.

If you would like to discuss any of these matters further or if you have suggestions or concerns, please contact me on 01434 681487, e-mail jane.wrigley@tynedale.gov.uk.

Jane Wrigley

February 22nd 2008