

# **North Tyneside Council**

## **Report to Council**

### **24 November 2022**

#### **Title: Questions by Members of the Public**

Notice has been received of the following questions from members of the public to be put to the Council meeting.

#### **1. Question to the Elected Mayor from Ms S Bennett from Whitley Bay**

It is widely known that St. Mary's Island car parks are hotspots for anti-social and illegal behaviour throughout the evening and night. The 24-hour vehicle access sees a night time increase in activities such as

- Gathering of cars.
- "Dogging" (the practice of watching or engaging in exhibitionist sexual activity in a public place).
- Racing of cars both up and down reserve road and around the carparks.
- "Donutting" (where a driver revs the engine hard and puts the car into a spin with tyre rubber burning).
- Continuous and synchronized blaring of horns.
- Deliberate hard revving of car exhausts and other exhaust noise enhancing effects.
- Blatant use of drugs.
- Playing loud music.
- Littering.
- Urinating and defecating.
- Use of offensive language.
- Intimidating behaviour to visitors and volunteers working on site.

It is not uncommon to have all of these activities occurring in a single evening. St. Mary's Island Nature Reserve is a place where people should be able to enjoy the peace and quiet of the natural environment and a place where wildlife is afforded protection from disturbance which surely puts these activities in conflict with the very ethos of a Nature Reserve.

We are aware that Northumbria police have carried out operation Dragoon in conjunction with the DVLA and North Tyneside Council is proposing possible controls on certain activities. However, neither are intended to be a long-term solution to tackling the widespread anti-social behaviour I have mentioned.

As this behaviour has been going on for some time my question is Does NTC intend to address the problem of night-time anti-social behaviour on the nature reserve and if so how and when?

## 2. Question to the Elected Mayor from Mr A Steele of Tynemouth

In the recent review of the council's Local Plan (North Tyneside Local Plan Five Year Review 2022 - Summary report) there are several references to the Plan not keeping up to date with national policy developments.

Despite this, the review considers that the Plan does not '*give rise to serious conflicts or omissions*' and is '*broadly aligned [and] flexible enough*' not to require review.

Considering this, and referencing sections 3 & 4, particularly around the Plan's commitments to housing - eg '*Presumption in favour of sustainable development*', '*Affordable housing*', '*Biodiversity net gain*', '*Tree lined streets*' - and the connection between these elements of housing and the council's commitment to the '*promotion of sustainable development ... and tackling climate change*',

Why has the council allowed developments with low environmental and design standards to be agreed or considered (eg developments at the Trinity Church and Tynemouth Station sites) saying '*while we would always like to see all new buildings developed with enhanced sustainability measures beyond those required by Building Regulations, it is not for the Council to impose such additional measures through the planning process*' when other councils are doing exactly that?