

**At a meeting of the ENVIRONMENTAL AND PLANNING REVIEW COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on MONDAY, 18<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2006 at 5.00 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Blackburn in the Chair

Councillors Fletcher, Higgins, Paul Maddison, L. Scott, Tye and Wares

**Also Present:-**

Councillor Lawson – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation

Councillor Porthouse (observing)

Councillor Rolph – Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood and Street Services

Councillor Tate (observing)

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Dixon, Macknight, Whalen and Wood.

At this juncture the Chairman introduced Colin Everett the new Head of Transport and Engineering and welcomed him to the meeting.

**Minutes of the Last Meeting**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2006 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**Declarations of interest  
(Including Whipping Declarations)**

No Declarations of Interest were declared.

## **Decriminalised Parking Enforcement – Action Plan Update**

The City Solicitor and Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) to inform the Committee of the progress made with regard to the action plan developed from the post implementation review of the Council's Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) regime.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Phil Barrett, Director of Development and Regeneration gave Members an update in relation to the Action Plan and the progress made from the post implementation review.

Councillor L. Scott commented that he was pleased to see progress is being maintained and queried when the judgement regarding the validity of standard tickets would be made as he believed it would be some time this week. Mr. Barrett confirmed that a decision had been reached and the wording of the Penalty Charge Notices for Sunderland was legally compliant. Repayments had been made to all those people who had appealed.

2. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

## **Queen Alexandra Bridge Major Refurbishment**

The City Solicitor and Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) to update the Environmental and Planning Review Committee on the current situation regarding the major refurbishment of the Queen Alexandra Bridge.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Colin Everett, Head of Transport and Engineering, provided the update, informing the Committee that the refurbishment work was on track to be completed at the end of September.

In response to a question from Councillor Tye regarding further disruption during the installation of lighting, Mr. Everett confirmed that there would be minimal disruption while this was happening.

3. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be received and noted.

## **Study Into The Council's Approach to Carbon Management – Carbon Management Programme**

The Director of Development and Regeneration and the City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) to receive details of the operation of the Carbon Management Programme within the Council and the approaches being adopted to reduce carbon emissions.

Jim Gillon, Sustainability Co-ordinator, gave a presentation to Members on progress since July 2006; short-term proposals for carbon savings so far; long term options to be explored and details of the Sunderland Energy Summit.

Councillor Wares welcomed the report but stated that the Council should not be sparing with regard to street lighting, as this should be a high priority.

In response to a question from Councillor Wares regarding whether future planning policies will be sympathetic to renewable energy applications, Keith Lowes, Head of Planning and Environment, confirmed that there was a Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) requirement that all major development will be expected to provide at least 10 per cent of their energy requirements from onsite renewable energy generation. This requirement is dependent on the type and nature of the scheme and any negative impact it may have.

Councillor L. Scott sought clarification on the processing of tree surgery waste into fuel suitable for use in wood chip boilers to provide heating. The Councillor made particular reference to the supply of recycled woodchip to sustain a school and queried what partnership mechanism would need to be in place in order for it to happen. Mr. Gillon emphasised the importance of early stage joined up commissioning, this would need to be married with a sharing of knowledge and experience from authorities who had already established production networks.

Regarding the Energy Summit, Mr. Gillon confirmed that Sunderland would be the host providing a forum for discussion on best practice.

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

### **Sunderland Energy Efficiency Programme 2006-2008**

The Director of Development and regeneration submitted a report (copy circulated) to consider measures being taken to implement the Sunderland Energy Efficiency Programme (SEEP) in order to tackle fuel poverty via the installation of energy efficiency measures.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Martin Bewick, Energy Conservation Officer, gave a presentation to Members detailing criteria on which to provide grant funding to the residents of the City from the funds allocated to the City Council by the North East Housing Board through the Single Housing Investment Programme (SHIP).

In response to a question from the Chairman regarding the number of improvements to households needed to meet home energy conservation targets, Mr. Bewick confirmed it was very difficult to quantify but gave as an example that improving 10,000 houses could lead to a 1% energy reduction.

Mr. Bewick advised that after 1020 (the UK's target date for a 20% reduction in carbon emissions), there would still be a significant number of houses in Sunderland requiring energy efficiency measures. There is a general reluctance amongst residents to embrace the scheme as people are suspicious of being offered something for nothing.

The Chairman enquired where publicity had been placed and whether there were any other schemes running alongside SEEP. The Committee were informed that publicity had been placed in *Sunrise* residents magazine and that there are a number of schemes being carried out in the City, however SEEP remains the best value for money.

Councillor Maddison requested that the Council receives an update report in 12 months time.

5. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the report be received and noted;
- (ii) an update report be brought back to the Committee in 12 months time.

### **Study Into Carbon Management – Committee Visits**

The City Solicitor and Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report to consider a proposed visit to Cassop Primary School, County Durham and Barnsley MBC as part of the Committee's study into Carbon Management.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

6. RESOLVED that the Committee agree to proceed with the visit and the Review Co-ordinator to circulate suggested dates to the Committee.

### **Reference from Cabinet 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2006 : Sunderland City Council LDF – Statement of Community Involvement - Adoption**

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek the advice and consideration of the Committee on a report considered by Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2006.

Keith Lowes, Head of Planning and Environment, introduced the report which he explained was necessary to meet statutory requirements by providing a formal statement of how the Council will involve the Community in preparing its LDF and in the consideration of planning applications.

Councillor Tye queried the methods and means by which Members are informed of forthcoming applications; for example notification is issued to

Councillors regarding the erection of telecommunication masts but not housing developments. Moreover, Councillor Tye queried whether Members could be notified via email of future developments.

Mr. Lowes explained that planning applications were listed on the Council web site, however he would look into the possibility of emailing Councillors the details.

Full consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

7. RESOLVED that the Cabinet be advised that the Review Committee endorsed the Statement of Community Involvement – Adoption.

### **Streetscene Update**

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to update Members about a range of activities to improve local environmental quality across the City during the course of 2006/07.

Peter High, Head of Environmental Services addressed the Committee and updated Members on achievements in tackling the areas of greatest concern to the public. These included food, drink and alcohol related litter, the removal of troublesome plantation, graffiti, fly tipping and open spaces affected by dog fouling.

In response to questions by the Chairman, Mr. High confirmed that chewing gum on the pavement was a significant problem in all areas where there was a concentration of drinking outlets and take-away shops and where school children congregate. Litter in the vicinity of fast food retailers has always been a problem, particularly at weekends.

Councillor L. Scott stressed the importance of realigning the grass cutting service with the Sunderland Housing Group. Councillor Scott also queried whether it would be feasible to end chemical edging as this was environmentally damaging.

Councillor Wares commended the Environmental Services Division on the quick response to residents' wishes but stated the need to have more litterbins.

Councillor Tye queried whether there was a weekend rapid deployment facility for people who dump rubbish in back lanes etc. Mr. High informed the Committee that this service is available until lunch time on a Saturday and Sunday, subsequently the emergency services team would need to be called who can alert the duty manager.

Councillors Fletcher and Higgins endorsed Councillor Wares' commendation on the quick response residents receive to a service requirement.

Upon discussion, it was:-

8. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

The Chair closed the meeting having thanked Members and Officers for their attendance.

(Signed) J. BLACKBURN  
(Chairman).